

JOANNA TÖYRÄÄNVUORI

“I Will Set His Hand on the Sea, and His Right Hand on the River”

North West Semitic Kingship and the Sea of Combat Myth: A Survey
of Hebrew Poetry in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Evidence

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty
of Theology, at the University of Helsinki in the Main Building, Auditorium XIII,
on the 19th of August 2016 at 12 o'clock.

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown. '—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

S. T. Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Part IV (1817)

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ISBN 978-951-51-2370-1 (paperback)
ISBN 978-951-51-2371-8 (PDF)

Printed in Unigrafia, Helsinki
2016

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the political use of the ancient North West Semitic myth of divine combat between the Storm-God and the Sea. The myth originated with the rise of the Sargonic Empire and was disseminated across ancient Near Eastern polities during the Amorite Kingdom period. Vestiges of the myth have also been retained in the Hebrew Bible. The aim of the study was to demonstrate how the myth was used in ancient North West Semitic societies to resolve the 'crisis of monarchy' through appeal to numinous legitimacy, and how reading a selection of Biblical texts in the framework of the tradition confirms the use of the myth in the same context in the emergent Palestinian kingdoms of the Iron Age.

As methods, the study employs form- and tradition-criticism, as well as the comparative/contrastive analysis of Ugaritic epic poetry, Akkadian diplomatic correspondence and royal inscriptions, and Hebrew poetry. A new method of textual triangulation has also been devised in an attempt to use the hypothetical convergence of traditions to approximate what of the mythology would have been known in ancient Palestine, from which few textual sources remain. Most of what is known of Israelite kingship and the monarchic institution is largely based on later and ideologically slanted material. This makes the comparison of Biblical texts to their antecedents necessary. The structure of the dissertation is three-pronged, beginning with the texts from ancient Mari, comparing them with witnesses from Ugarit, and finally contrasting them with the traditions of the broader Near East. The references to the myth in the Hebrew Bible are discussed in connection with the relevant witnesses from these traditions. The different examples of the tradition witness to the continuation, longevity, malleability, and the capacity of the myth to transform to suit changing historical realities.

The investigation concludes that a myth of symbolic combat between the Storm-God and the Sea was likely used as a foundational myth by the mostly polytheistic Pre-Exilic kingship in Palestine. In contrast to previous research, the study demonstrates three distinct sources for the Biblical traditions in addition to living local iterations of the myth. In addition to vestiges retained in the Hebrew Bible, based on the analogy of preceding, concurrent, and continuing traditions in the shared cultural sphere, the accumulation of mythic traditions suggests that it was used in the Palestinian kingdoms to resolve the crisis of monarchy and to legitimize sovereign political rule. After the end of the Jerusalem monarchy, the myth was democratized and reformed to legitimize the existence of the people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Herbert Niehr, without whom the writing of this dissertation would scarcely have been possible. In the University of Helsinki, I offer my thanks to Docent Juha Pakkala, who has seen me through every step of the process. Prof. Dr. Martti Nissinen has also offered some invaluable advice over the years as well as allowing me the privilege of finishing the work as a member of the *Changes in Sacred Texts and Traditions* centre of excellence. Dr. Kirsi Valkama's comments on several portions of this dissertation have been indispensable. In 2010–2011 I was fortunate to be able to study in the Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, in the land of *Dichter und Denker*, with the funding of the Deutsche Akademischer Austausch Dienst. In the year 2014 I had the opportunity of studying in Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität-München under Prof. Dr. Christoph Levin.

I would also like to extend acknowledgement to all the members of *Muinaisraeilainen uskonto* for their valued insight into all things ANE. I would especially like to thank MTh. Lauri Laine, with whom I started my studies in the Ugaritic language under the guidance of Prof. Dr. emeritus Tapani Harviainen in the Autumn of 2006; and also Prof. Dr. emeritus Simo Parpola for having the privilege of participating in his final Sumerian class, and to my other teachers in ancient languages: Raija Mattila, Saana Svärd, Jaana Toivari-Viitala, Petri Pohjanlehto. Special mention also goes to my mother for her unrelenting support throughout my life, and to Scott Holder, whose contribution toward the finishing of this thesis goes far beyond the revision of multiple chapters.

It is also necessary to point out that none of the people mentioned here are responsible for the conclusions presented in this dissertation. In fact, there exists hardly a point to follow that had not been contested by one or more of the persons acknowledged above. And for this I am in their debt, for such discussions forced me time and again to refine my arguments. Further, I extend my gratitude to Dr. Albion Butters and Dr. Robert Whiting for proof-reading and checking the language of the thesis as well as advice on content. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my family for facilitating not only the writing of the thesis but also my University education from start to finish, and to my friends for being there. I could not have achieved this without your help and support.

Dedicated to the memory my father, who sailed the seven seas.

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1. Introduction and the Aims of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The object of my study is the (anthropomorphic or deified) sea of the North West Semitic [henceforth NWS]¹ Combat Myth,² and its connection with royal ideology. My hypothesis is that the NWS tradition of the myth of divine combat, which had its origins in the political mythology of the Sargonic kings, was used as a foundational myth in the ancient NWS kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean. The myth functioned as the basis of numinous legitimacy for monarchic rule, and the monarchies of Pre-Exilic Palestine were among several Syro-Palestinian kingdoms making use of this mythology.³ It is through the study of these different iterations of the myth in the ancient Near East [henceforth ANE], predominantly in the eastern Mediterranean and Syrian areas, that I wish to create a framework for the re-interpretation of certain texts of the Hebrew Bible [henceforth HB] that have been historically connected with the mythology. The research question is: How was the Combat Myth used to resolve the ‘crisis of monarchy’ in ancient Syro-Palestinian societies of the NWS cultural sphere, and does reading a selection of the texts of the HB in the framework of the Combat Myth allow the confirmation of the use of the myth in the same context in the Palestinian kingdoms of the Iron Age?

The crisis built into the political system of monarchy, being the state of affairs in which supreme power is held by a sovereign individual, is in the question “Why should *the many* do as *an individual* says?”, and the answer to that question has, throughout the ages, been: “Or else.” It could be argued that it is the threat of violence from which all political force, all other bodies of authority, ultimately derive, and a system of government will remain stable only as long as

¹ North West Semitic is used in this study as a linguistic rather than an ethnic designation. See discussion on the use of the term in section 1.6.

² A myth, in the definition of Otzen (1980b, 58), is a narrative about “things that occur outside historical time and space, and which only coincide with history during the cultic repetition of the primal event”, Human 2007, 148, “For the everyday life and religious environment of ordinary people these [mythic] narratives not only mediated the transcendent (meta-empirical) reality and activities of various deities, but it was a means of communicating the truth about the inexplicable world and nature of the gods”, and in the definition of Batto 1992, 11, is a “narrative (story) concerning fundamental symbols that are constitutive of, or paradigmatic for, human existence”. It is the combination of these descriptions that has been the working definition of what constitutes a myth in this dissertation. Mythology refers both to a collection of myths and to the study thereof, but in the discourse of this study the former definition is preferred.

³ Finkelstein 2013, 3.

the “Or else” is believable to the majority of the subjects.⁴ Or, in the words of Leo Tolstoy in his oft-quoted essay on *The Love of Law and the Law of Violence*:

The mistake of all political doctrines, from the most conservative to the most advanced, which has brought men to their present lamentable condition, is the same: to keep men in society by the aid of violence so as to make them accept the present social organization and the rule of conduct that it imposes. -- Constraint always consists in forcing others, by threats of suffering or death, to do what they refuse to do.⁵

What I intend, as I discuss the use of the Combat Myth in the ‘legitimation of political power’, is simply to indicate the shape that the answer to the question took in the NWS cultural sphere. My primary concern is the *use* of the myth in the Biblical texts. In the following chapters I compare the NWS texts pertaining to the topic with alleged traces of the Combat Myth in the HB, and critically review whether the mythic conception of the sea, or the theme of the divine conquering of the sea, can be connected with the establishment of kingship and with the legitimation of monarchic rule. In this study, I seek to demonstrate that the Combat Myth was the regional and temporal form of the resolution to the crisis of monarchy in the emergent kingdoms of the south-eastern Mediterranean in the Iron Age.

1.2 Research Questions and Aims of the Study

The purpose of this work is to examine the Combat Myth as an instrument of monarchic legitimation in the NWS (largely synonymous with Syro-Palestinian) kingdoms and city-states, with specific emphasis on the kingdoms of Mari, Ugarit, and Iron Age Palestine.⁶ These societies seem to have modelled their royal ideologies on the traditions originated with the great Akkadian Sargon (*šarru-kên/-kīnu*) and his conquests, among which likely featured the important cult centre of Aleppo, where the myth of the Storm-God’s battle with the Sea may have originated.⁷ This will be concluded by examining the sea as it appears in the

⁴ The relationship between violence and political power was explored in the many works of H. Arendt. Her essay “On Violence” (1971), in which she discussed the distinctions between the terms power, authority, violence, strength, and force is especially pertinent here. In her view, violence can lead to the most perfect and instant obedience, although the *use* does not in itself enhance the power of rulers.

⁵ Tolstoy 1948, 20.

⁶ On the problematic designations of eras on the Levantine littoral, see Redford 1992, 65.

⁷ According to Loretz (1990, 73), Aleppo was the most important cult centre for the Storm-God in the ANE. The cult of the Aleppan Storm-God is already attested in the Ebla tablets, dating to the 26th century BCE. Aleppo is not mentioned in the royal inscriptions of Sargon as a point of

poetic texts of the HB, specifically with regard to the possible connection of the sea of the NWS Combat Myth and the institution of monarchy in contrast with the parallel evidence from the ANE. It is not my intention to force analogies between the traditions but to examine the traditions in a cultural continuum.

The two fundamental questions regarding power posed by M. Foucault were “What is power?” and “Where does power come from?”⁸ and I argue that the answer to the latter of these questions in the ancient NWS polities is to be found in the Combat Myth. But even if the NWS Combat Myth had been in political use in the Palestinian kingdoms during and after the Pre-Exilic era, most traces of this use would have been erased or re-contextualized in the later Deuteronomistic movement and the emerging anti-monarchic stance.⁹ In the texts redacted and transmitted during the age of this sort of “intolerant” or “programmatic” monolatry,¹⁰ any traces of the myth would have been preserved only in contexts where the aspects previously shared by the god and the earthly king, or where the earthly king had partaken of the aspects of the god (an *icon-object relationship*), became transposed onto the one God that survived the reforms.¹¹

conquest, but neighbouring Ebla is explicitly mentioned.

⁸ Foucault 1982, 786. The basic definition he gives to power is as a mode of objectification that transforms human beings into subjects. Svård (2015, 124–134) discussed the methodological considerations in the investigation of power and power relations in the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

⁹ The Deuteronomistic heritage in the psalms particularly has been discussed by Marttila 2012. For the re-imagining of kingship in the Deuteronomistic History, see Gerbrandt 1986. There are very few references to the Combat Myth in the Biblical books falling under this description.

¹⁰ Pakkala 1999. According to Bonnet & Merlo (2002, 81–82), “Most probably the negative vision of monarchy prevailed in post-Exilic times and in deuteronomistic ideology [...]”.

¹¹ On the transcendence of the king’s corporeal form (or how the king was thought to inhabit a mortal body, a political body, and a permanent body simultaneously), see Hamilton 2005. For features once shared by other divinities that were transferred on Yahweh after the Exile, see Human 2007, 150. He also writes: “They survive in a new context, in this instance Yahweh-faith, only as literary symbols or images. In other words, they become mere vestiges serving as poetic vehicles in order to portray the theology about Yahweh”. Talon 2005b, 100, writing in the Assyrian context, mentions the concept of the king as the “mirror image of Aššur on earth” (e.g. in SAA 10 207 r. 12-13). Kutsko 2000, 60, discussed the king as the image (*šalmu*) of the storm-god Enlil in the Middle Assyrian Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. Sasson 2014, 675, also discussed the role of the king in the published fragments of the then unpublished Zimri-Lim epic, describing the king as the *zikrum* (translated by Sasson as ‘image’, but also containing connotations of the name and the fame) of Enlil – now published in Guichard 2014, in which it is the gods Anu and Dagan for whom Zimri-Lim is described as the *zikrum* (col i 13, 15, iii 31, 33). Regardless of the name of the Storm-God, this hints at an icon-object relationship between the god and the king already in the Mariote context. The concept of the “body politic” and “body natural” of the king in the ANE context has been discussed recently by Kühn 2015, who discussed the continuation after death of the king’s political body, manifest e.g. in their throne names.

The development of Yahweh’s kingship (and its relationship to the kingship of Marduk) has been examined recently by Flynn 2014, but his discussion barely touches on the question of the relationship of Yahweh’s kingship with Israelite kingship.

D. Edelman explained the process of transition by the use of various strategies in the texts, one of which was the assigning of the domains formerly overseen by other deities to Yahweh, who was “now in charge of all aspects of life and death”.¹² In his essay, Foucault suggested examining power relations through the antithesis of the application and methods used in wielding power, or the “antagonism of strategies”.¹³ In order to discover legitimate applications of monarchic authority in the ANE we should also examine cases where illegitimate forms of power are presented and displayed. In the HB context this could mean observing monarchic figures of oppressive nations or, as I discuss subsequently, the subversion of the tropes (or the *topos*) of kingship in Post-Exilic narratives.

O. Loretz also discussed the Post-Exilic transference to Yahweh of the cultic aspects and functions of the king, who was central to the cult for a very long time. The investment in the symbolism was so great that its transformation and transposition became more appealing than its outright disregard.¹⁴ Symbols of power are not, in the words of D. Kertzer, mere “window dressing” on the reality of politics, but are in actuality “the stuff of which politics is made”. It is the symbolically charged words and actions that characterize rituals that are an integral part of the legitimation of states.¹⁵ A distinction must also be made between tracing a literary discourse, which I attempt in this study, and how that discourse was impressed on the largely illiterate populations of the ANE.¹⁶ While the latter is an interesting question, I have not sought to solve it within the confines of this work.

According to Foucault, it is necessary to distinguish power relations from relationships of communication, which transmit information by means of a language, a system of signs, or other symbolic media, since the production and circulation of elements of meaning can have as their objective, or as their consequence, certain results in the realm of power, and the latter are not simply aspects of the former.¹⁷ This makes the study of the Combat Myth *crucial* to our understanding of political legitimation in the ancient world: the myth was not merely a legitimation of power, but its transmission exercised power in itself.

¹² Edelman 2009, 82.

¹³ Foucault 1982, 780.

¹⁴ Loretz 1990, 206.

¹⁵ Kertzer 1988, 6.

¹⁶ Nielsen 2012, 15. He suggests that the popular discourse was conducted via “oral traditions, public recitations of prayers and other ritualized utterances and actions, speeches and proclamations by the king and priests, and the acclamations of the assembled masses”.

¹⁷ Foucault 1982, 786.

Every retelling of the myth – whether in lapidary inscriptions, iconographic representations, or in communal ritual – was a *use* of power and an *act* of power.¹⁸

The particular aim of this investigation is to examine Biblical occurrences of the lexical item ‘sea’ (יָם) in the framework of ancient Israelite kingship and the institution of monarchy in the context of the Combat Myth as found in the ANE parallel materials. I have set out to discover, through examining the mytho-religious texts from the city of Ugarit and the letters from Mari in connection with Hebrew poetry, what it is possible to know of the proposed political use of the Combat Myth in textual evidence that is often sketchy, in broken context, and notoriously difficult to interpret.

It is important to establish, based on the textual (and to a lesser degree in the context of this study, the iconographic) evidence that has been preserved for us, whether this sort of political function can be assumed to have been a feature of the mytho-religious conceptual framework and the intellectual world of the NWS polities – or whether it actually formed a part of the royal cult proper. The political function of the Ugaritic epic has been gaining momentum in the research of recent years. Belnap, for example, observes: “Regardless of whether the Baal myth was used for polemic or propagandistic purposes, the myth does describe a political process in which Baal is eventually accepted as legitimate king”.¹⁹ In my view, this reflects on the political process of the city itself: through the acceptance of Baal as the legitimate king, the legitimacy of the mortal king was confirmed.

I also expect my research to demonstrate that ancient Pre-Exilic Israelite kingship and the monarchic institutions of Palestine shared a common symbolic language with the rest of the NWS cultural sphere. Language is an important facet of culture and tradition, and the language through which a myth is traded is an integral part of its transmission.²⁰ It is not beyond the realm of possibility for the

¹⁸ Regarding this, my discussion takes place in a context different from using ‘legitimizing’ as a confirmation of “the existence of [...] entities by explaining their meaning [...] in order to guarantee the existence of these entities”, which is how Müller 2014, 257, employs the term. While this is an acknowledged feature of ancient thought (see e.g. Sasson 2008, 491: “understanding why and how an object or organism came to be also explained its function”), the term has an established definition in political science as the popular acceptance to a governing authority. By legitimization I am referring to the confirmation of the existence of a power relationship rather than the confirmation of the existence of entities.

¹⁹ Belnap 2011, 46.

²⁰ Watkins 1995, 451, takes the view that myths cannot be translated from language to language or culture to culture without it being damaging to the “real meaning”, taking a stance against the older view that allowed myths to be transferred across cultural spheres without significant loss of meaning. I agree that language plays a very important role in the transmission of mythology and ideology and that we would do well to respect the distinctions. While, for example, the

texts of the HB to have preserved traditions similar to the surrounding cultures, as traces of ancient Semitic myths have been detected even in the Greek literature of the 8th century BCE, the sphere of cultural continuum forming in connection with military expansion and growing economic activities.²¹ One of the central concepts of this symbolic language was the Combat Myth, traces of which have been found, or at least postulated, in several books of the HB. The connection between the myth and kingship is well established. It is the legitimizing function of the myth that has yet to be argued beyond vague reference to the use of myths in this function in general.

Were the inhabitants of the city-states and kingdoms of ancient Palestine aware of the tradition of the NWS Combat Myth? Was the Combat Myth applied in their societies in cultic contexts connected with kingship? How did the myth function as an agent of political legitimation in the societies that made use of it? These are the sorts of questions I will strive to find answers to in this study. My hypothesis is that if indeed a myth of originally Sargonic political propaganda utilizing the motif of the divine subjugation of the sea was employed by many – if not most – of the royal, princely, or “official” cults of other NWS kingdoms or city-states from at least the Late Bronze Age [henceforth LBA] onwards, it would have been natural for the emergent monarchies of Palestine to adopt and use a similar myth to legitimize their newfound monarchic institutions, the cultural imprint of which is still present in much later HB texts.²² The most important research problem in the investigation is whether a connection that reflects a similar link in the parallel ANE materials can be established between kingship and the sea of the Combat Myth in the poetic texts of the HB and what such a connection can tell us about the legitimation of political power and the resolution of the crisis of monarchy in ancient Israel.

Understanding the study as a survey, being the sampling or partial collection of the textual evidence taken and used to *approximate* and *indicate* the results of what a hypothetical complete collection and analysis of the evidence would reveal, should explain the apparent imbalance and disproportion in the examination of the Hebrew textual evidence, as opposed to the more

Ugaritic *ym* and the Hittite *aruna(s)* may have an overlapping semantic field and may in fact iconically refer to the same object, they may not do so in precisely the same manner.

²¹ Burkert 1992.

²² Wyatt 2005 [1985], 16, mentions established patterns and ideologies that these new monarchies of Southern Palestine might have adopted as guides on how to model their society in the 11th century.

comprehensive study of the parallel ANE materials. This is diametrically opposed to the more usual method of detailed analysis of the Biblical texts coupled with a somewhat desultory treatment of the parallel materials. By sketching the intellectual background of the Biblical texts, it is my intention to construct a possible framework for the reinterpretation of the selected texts in the context of their ANE antecedents in order to *re-contextualize* them.

1.3 Background and Theoretical Framework

The NWS Combat Myth is the narrative of a battle between a god, commonly the Storm-God, and his adversary, who is often connected with the (Mediterranean) sea.²³ Myths of conflict or combat are known in various forms throughout the ANE, and their origin may well stem from mankind's martial nature.²⁴ Yet there are certain distinctive characteristics to the miscellaneous traditions, such as the aquatic nature of the foe and the fact that the sea played a part of little to no significance in the Sumerian pantheons,²⁵ which allow us to contemplate a specific NWS form or version of the myth. Indeed, it has been claimed that the theme of the Storm-God's battle with the personified sea was deeply rooted in the mytho-religious traditions of the NWS Bronze Age.²⁶

The most complete version or tradition of the NWS Combat Myth is known to us through the cuneiform alphabetic texts discovered in the ancient city of Ugarit²⁷ in 1929.²⁸ However, it has been suggested that the concept originated

²³ According to Malamat (1998, 24), the Mediterranean Sea is of "immediate concern" when discussion focuses on Syria-Palestine.

²⁴ While I use the term 'combat' in this dissertation, I think that Foucault's definition of 'struggle' is more conceptually fitting for the analysis of the myth. He (1982, 781) presents three categories of struggle: 1) against forms of domination, 2) against forms of exploitation, and 3) against subjection. The struggle of the Baal Cycle is either in the first or the third category: it can be interpreted either as Baal's struggle against social domination by Yamm or Baal's struggle against submission (of his subjectivity) by Yamm. The first is what Foucault viewed as predominant in feudal societies which, while anachronistic, could be applied to the social system of the Amorite kingdoms. In fact, Sasson 1966, 11, calls it a feudal system created out of the whole region by the leadership of the Yamhadian dynasty.

²⁵ See S. Dalley: *Myths from Mesopotamia* 1998, D. O. Edzard: *Meer* 1993.

²⁶ R. S. Hess: *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* 2007. A. R. W. Green's *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (2003), is the seminal work on the ANE storm-gods. See p. ix for a list of other works concerning the Storm-God, among them Eissfeldt 1932, Vanel 1964, and Deighton 1982.

²⁷ *Ras Shamra*, on the coast of Syria in the vicinity of modern Latakia. See Loretz 1990, 1–13, on the discovery of the texts.

²⁸ The discovery of the texts was followed by the decipherment of the cuneiform alphabet and the provisional translations of the principal texts between the years 1929 and 1932. Curtis 1985,

in the Old Babylonian [henceforth OB] period,²⁹ during the ‘Golden Age’ of ancient Mari.³⁰ The texts of the archive of the Amorite city of Mari are for the most part dated to the 18th century BCE, the latest examples coming from c. 1760.³¹ Although the city is not as well known to the general audience as its more famous contemporaries Babylon and Assur, Mari had a central location in the ANE, standing nearly equidistant from the Egyptian Memphis, the Hittite Hattusha, and the Minoan Crete.³² In a letter-oracle discovered at Mari the storm-god Adad announces that he relinquishes to King Zimri-Lim the weapons with which he attacked the sea (FM 7 38). My translation of the letter, which is central to this thesis, can be found in the Appendix.³³

I began examining the sea in my MA thesis, in which I compared every instance of the Hebrew word for sea (יָם) in the Psalter to occurrences of the sea-god Yamm (ym) in the Ugaritic texts, particularly in the so-called Baal Cycle, a work of epic poetry. In one of the chapters of the thesis I focused on the coincidence of the parallel word pair ‘sea’ and ‘river’, and how the context of the occurrences in the Psalter seemed to suggest a connection between this parallel pair and ancient NWS or Syro-Palestinian royal ideology. I found several allusions to the political use of the Combat Myth both in the Ugaritic texts and elsewhere in the ancient NWS cultural sphere, but in these works the theory was only very cautiously, and never systematically, applied to Biblical texts. This particular chapter of the thesis became the impetus for the current dissertation.³⁴

According to Foucault, power exists in three qualities: origin, nature, and manifestations. The military campaigns of the Mesopotamian monarchs displayed all three of these qualities.³⁵ It is possible that the propaganda piece FM 7 38, which was apparently used by the Mariote monarchic institution to legitimize the

18–33.

²⁹ Malamat 1998.

³⁰ *Tell Harīrī*, situated north of the modern border of Syria and Iraq on the middle Euphrates. The city was already a major power in the Early Dynastic period, but it was in the OB period that the Amorite population settled. Sasson 1988, 454.

³¹ The Mari letters are significant in that they have allowed many new historical references with regard to the reigns of kings and the military-political conflicts in the MBA, as well as increasing our knowledge of the geographic realities of the ancient Near Eastern regions. Bonechi 1990, 18.

³² Bonechi 1990, 15. The smith Kothar-wa-Īšasi of the Baal Cycle, the fashioner of Baal’s weapons with which the god defeated the sea, was closely associated with the island of Crete. He was both from Crete (*kptr*) and Memphis (*hkpt*), which may have reflected the association of these locations with metallurgy or the weapon industry. What this shows is the movement of traditions in the ‘international’ Bronze Age.

³³ Also published in Töyräänvuori 2012.

³⁴ Töyräänvuori 2008.

³⁵ Foucault 1982, 785.

somewhat precarious kingship of Zimri-Lim, may in fact refer to a military campaign conducted by Zimri-Lim's ancestor Yahdun-Lim.³⁶ This military campaign had taken the anterior king to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, where the king had partaken in a ritual act involving the divine weapons.³⁷ Ancient military campaigns had three different kinds of possible objectives: military, diplomatic, or that of cultic offering. These objectives may have been interrelated. In essence, however, these campaigns were a *show of power*. In another inscription³⁸ the Mariote king claims that the Storm-God had made him king and given him possession of his weapons. A similar cultic practice, where the king symbolically washes his weapons in the sea, is also known from the texts of other ancient Semitic peoples, starting with the stories connected with the life of the Akkadian king Sargon the Great. It is important to note the fact that from its very inception, this mythology held a connection with monarchic power.

The study of the legitimization of Israelite kingship was taken up in Mettinger's *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (1979), although the Combat Myth does not feature in his discussion. The legitimization of ANE kingship was based on the authority of the divine. This numinous legitimacy of power was often based on the figure of the monarchic or dynastic divinity, which in the case of most of the NWS or eastern Mediterranean kingdoms was the figure of the Storm-God. Legitimate rule may be defined as the type of rule incorporating popular consent and compliance with the authority of a governing regime. The division of political legitimacy into numinous and civil legitimacy has been discussed by Bone, using the ancient Egyptian state as an example of the former.³⁹

Max Weber, in his classic essay *Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft*⁴⁰ divided political legitimacy, which he saw as the basis of every system of authority, into three types: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Following Weber's categories, the legitimization of ancient Semitic kingship would

³⁶ Yahdun-Lim was most likely the grandfather of Zimri-Lim. His father may have been named Hadni[...]. Sasson 1998, 457, suggests that Yahdun is the formal throne name form of Hadni. Charpin & Durand 1991, however, think that Zimri-Lim's father was called Hadni-Addu, brother to Yahdun-Lim.

³⁷ On the difficulty of defining 'ritual' in academic contexts and the different ways in which it has been used in the ANE context, see Porter 2005, 5–6 (includes bibliography).

³⁸ E4.6.8.1 9–14: "The god Dagan proclaimed my kingship (and) gave me the mighty weapon that defeats the enemies of my kingship".

³⁹ Bone 1972, 290–292.

⁴⁰ Preussische Jahrbücher 187: 1922, pp. 1–2.

fall under one of the first two, depending on the political situation. Traditional legitimacy draws its legitimation from historical continuity, whereas charismatic legitimacy draws it from the personal charisma of the ruler in times of weakened political and administrative institutions. Especially the ancient Semitic usurper kings would fall under the latter category.⁴¹ I would further suggest that there are four main (and often overlapping) sources of legitimacy for monarchic rule: birth, history, election, and conquest. In the NWS cultural sphere, election and conquest were the predominant legitimating rationales, whereas birth and history were the foundations of the ancient Egyptian monarchy.

Traces of the ANE Combat Myth have been read into the texts of the HB ever since H. Gunkel, working together with the Assyriologist W. Zimmerli, opened new vistas for research with his 1895 paradigm-shifting tome, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit – eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12*.⁴² As one can tell merely by the title of the work, Gunkel connected the Combat Myth with creation. This is understandable, as his sole reference to the ANE myth was in the newly discovered *Enūma eliš* [henceforth *EE*] in which the aspect of creation features prominently. Unfortunately, however, Gunkel's thesis has dominated the discussion on myths of divine combat in the HB, even though the discovery of hosts of new texts since 1895 has greatly increased our knowledge of myths of this type from the ANE.⁴³

Of course, the connection between the Ugaritic mytho-religious texts and the Combat Myth in the HB was made soon after the discovery of the tablets from Ras Shamra, which have been studied in tandem with the other ANE witnesses to the Combat Myth since the deciphering of the Ugaritic script in the early 1930s. The texts, especially the example *par excellence* of the NWS Combat Myth, the Baal Cycle, have also been compared with Biblical texts and specifically the

⁴¹ While usurpation may not have been the most common route to monarchic power in the ancient Semitic world, the *anxieties* caused by the concept have still given it a rather central position in the various narratives and mythologies.

⁴² Gunkel 1895. In this study references to Gunkel are made to the English translation of 2006 because, as Peter Machinist states in the foreword to the edition, the translator K. W. Whitney Jr. did more than just translate the volume, he clarified and collected references to primary and secondary literature and arranged the bibliography and index in a fashion that better suits the scholarly pursuits of the 21st century.

⁴³ In the words of Sonik 2013, 3: "Gunkel's broader vision continues to resound in contemporary scholarship in points both subtle and explicit". Loretz 1990, 153 and Day 2000, 98, among others, have opined that this theory has been in need of reconsideration following the discovery of the Ugaritic texts. A recent reconsideration has been published in Scurlock & Beal, eds. (2013).

poetic material therein, from very early days.⁴⁴ M. S. Smith has compiled a detailed history of Ugaritic and Biblical studies in his *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (2011), which may be consulted for the purposes of general history of research into the area.

The texts from Mari have also been studied since the 1930s, particularly by G. Dossin and J.-M. Durand, the editors of the *Archives Royales de Mari* and *Archives Royales de Mari Textes* series.⁴⁵ Many of the early texts were also published in the journal *Syria*. The Mari archives, however, are vast, and many of the texts have yet to be published.⁴⁶ Comparative analysis has likewise been made of a rather small portion of the texts. However, *Mari: Annales du Recherches Interdisciplinaires* (1982–) has had some good examples of the interdisciplinary study of the texts. While the three text corpora (Ugaritic, Mariote, and Hebrew) are less than useful for the drawing of direct parallels or analogies due to their diachrony,⁴⁷ they can be quite useful for other pursuits.⁴⁸ For example, we can use them to draw rough outlines of the development of traditions, which I intend to do on the part of the Combat Myth in this thesis.

Examples of a scene of symbolic combat with the sea can also be found in various Syrian and Anatolian seal impressions and plaques.⁴⁹ Many seal impressions also bear witness to the battle between the Storm-God and a serpentine creature that has been interpreted as symbolizing the sea or a sea-god. In an analogous iconographic motif on the so-called Baal-stele of Ugarit (*Baal au*

⁴⁴ Hebrew and Ugaritic are both NWS languages and share a linguistic connection. Ugaritic, Aramaic, Amorite, and Canaanite are the four main branches of NWS languages, with Biblical Hebrew being one of the sub-branches of Canaanite. In previous research Ugaritic has also been categorized as a sub-branch of Canaanite, but this position is no longer held. The grammar of Proto-Hebrew (of which the traces of case-endings in Biblical poetry are given as evidence) is thought to have accorded with the grammatical features of Ugaritic poetry. Craigie 1983a, 54; Loretz 1990, 15; Segert 1999, 170.

⁴⁵ Excavations on the site have been conducted from 1933 to 1974 under A. Parrot, J. Magueron from 1975 to 2004, and P. Butterlin subsequently. Preliminary reports were mostly published in the journal *Syria* and the final reports in the *Mission Archéologique de Mari* series by Parrot. For bibliography on Mariote studies, see Frayne 2008, 294–295. Hand copies of the tablets were initially published in *Textes cuneiforms du Louvre* and *Textes cuneiforms de Mari* series, continuing as the ARM/ARMT series, the latter of which contains transliteration and usually a French translation with commentary.

⁴⁶ Of the published texts, c. 30% are letters, the rest featuring economic, administrative and legal texts. Pardee & Glass 1984, 90.

⁴⁷ Hallo 1997, xxv–xxvi, described diachronic intertextuality as a ‘vertical’ axis in contrast to the ‘horizontal’ axis of contextual comparison. For recent discussion on diachrony in the Hebrew Bible, see the edited volume *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*, eds. C. L. Miller-Naudé & Z. Zevit (2012).

⁴⁸ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79, also point out that diachronic investigations within a tradition may reveal strands of internal evolution in the tradition.

⁴⁹ Malamat 1994.

foudre, RS 4.427), the Storm-God is portrayed as standing on what appears to be the very sea.⁵⁰ The weapons of the Storm-God portrayed in the bulk of the iconographic material, as well as in the stele from Ugarit, are a club and a “lightning-tree”, which has been researched relatively little. In the text of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, on the other hand, the weapons made by the smith Kothar-wa-Ḫasis, and wielded by Baal in the battle against Yamm, were clubs called by the names *ygrsh* and *aymr*.⁵¹ A consideration of the weapons portrayed in various traditions of the Combat Myth is justified by the fact that such weapons are referred to in almost all NWS forms of the myth and the particular weapons in the alternative traditions differ. The one textual tradition where direct references to weapons have not been discovered explicitly in conjunction with scenes of **divine combat** is the Biblical tradition (although Wyatt made a good effort at it in *Arms and the King* 1998), even though weapons are frequently mentioned in connection with the god Yahweh in his manifestation as a Storm-God.⁵²

Traces of the NWS Combat Myth in the HB have been established, or at the very least posited, especially in poetic contexts. NWS poetry, whether it be epic poetry, psalmody, or prophetic poetry, all consisting of units of rigid parallelism (a trait often referred to as *parallelismus membrorum*), is due to its nature more resistant to change and better able to withstand and forestall the naturally occurring changes in the transmission of texts than prosaic texts. Most of

⁵⁰ Although E. Williams-Forte (1983) interpreted the wavy lines at the bottom of the stele as symbolizing mountain tops or the serpent, also seen in them by Felton 1996. But a connection between the mountains and the rivers existed already in ancient times, discussed, e.g. by Abel (1933, 151) in the context of Mt. Casius and the Orontes connected both to Baal and to his adversary. On p. 153, he also described Typhon, associated with the Orontes and the Dragon, as the personification of the hurricane. In fact, his description of the associated symbolism is not only one of the first modern scholarly discourses on the matter, but also one of the best explanations of the symbolic constellations of serpent, dragon, storm, mountain, natural volcanic activity, and destruction in textual and iconographic witnesses that are discussed in this study, and therefore deserves to be quoted in full, answering as it does the inevitably arising question of how these things are related:

“Sous sa forme originelle Typhon est la personnification de l’ouragan déchaîné qui arrache les arbres, fait crouler les rochers, tourbillonne avec des sifflements sinistres; c’est le cyclone glissant rapidement à la surface des eaux ou de la terre, détruisant maisons et vaisseaux dans un mouvement de violente rotation. Les mythographes et les décorateurs antiques sur céramique ont symbolisé sa rapidité par des ailes, son tournolement par des reptiles et son sifflement par des têtes de dragons. Divinité chtonienne, il s’élance d’une caverne comme un serpent aux mille replis; fils de la Terre et du Tartare, il s’attaque au ciel lui-même contre lequel il lance d’énormes quartiers de roche et de bouillonnements de feu, car il est aussi le maître du volcanisme”.

⁵¹ Sanders 2004, 167–168, suggests that the naming of the weapons is significant. Livingstone 1986, 60ff., discussed the divine weapons of Ninurta. The entire text, which he dubbed the ‘Weapons Name Exposition’, concerns the names of the twelve weapons of the god, and the weapons themselves are called ‘gods’.

⁵² See my discussion in Töyräänvuori 2012.

the Biblical passages that have ostensibly been connected with the Combat Myth are not only found in poetry, but are also found in archaic or archaicising forms of poetry. It could be claimed that the more Hebrew poetry shares common features with other attested forms of NWS poetry, the more it has preserved ‘authentic’ elements of NWS traditions.⁵³

On the other hand, it could be posited that Biblical poetry is more ‘archaic’, or at least purposefully archaicising, where it *agrees* with other examples of NWS texts. Similarities between Hebrew poetry and other examples of NWS texts are not limited to the occurrence of parallelism (see section 2.3). Such similarities run from the very level of word-pairs and shared symbolic language to poetic foot, colon, verse, strophe, and all the way to the canticle and even the canto.⁵⁴ The relationship of the Ugaritic texts to the redaction history of Biblical poetry has been studied by M. Marttila.⁵⁵ Ugaritic studies in general, and the comparative studies between the Ugaritic and the Biblical texts in Finland, are largely comprised of his works. Perhaps not coincidentally, his work has also focused on the relationship of the Ugaritic texts to Biblical poetry in particular.

Most of what we know of ancient Israelite kingship and the monarchic institution is largely based on later and ideologically slanted material, which is what makes the comparison of Biblical texts to their antecedents necessary.⁵⁶ It has been suggested, most notably in various works of M. S. Smith and N. Wyatt, that one of the primary functions of the NWS Combat Myth was legitimizing kingship and monarchic rule – as opposed to the more established view of the Myth & Ritual school, views espoused especially during the period between 1945 and 1970 and particularly in the European context (especially by W. R. Smith, S. H. Hooke, T. H. Gaster, and J. Frazer), which associated the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, and the conflict myths of the ANE in general, with the changing of the seasons and a fertility cult connected to the agricultural calendar. The myths were widely explained by the weather conditions of the area of the “Fertile Crescent”, and by

⁵³ Joosten 2012, 282, admits that some of the poetry of the HB “may reflect the Hebrew language of the premonarchic period”.

⁵⁴ See M. C. A. Korpel & J. C. De Moor’s *The Fundamentals of Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry* 1986 and O. Loretz, *Psalmestudien* 1971 and *Die Psalmen II* 1979.

⁵⁵ Marttila 2006a, 2012.

⁵⁶ The early Hebrew monarchic institution has been examined recently by Dietrich 2007. He combined both archaeological and later Biblical textual evidence to sketch a reconstruction of the kingship of the 10th century BCE, or the so-called time of the united monarchy. While the examination is not uncontroversial, it presents a good overview of what evidence of the institution is available.

the nature of farming and animal husbandry (e.g. R. Dussaud 1931, J. C. De Moor 1971). Wyatt has continually warned against reducing Ugaritic religion to a mere fertility cult.⁵⁷ In *Myths of Power*, he also discussed the inverse tendency with Biblical studies in the refusal to engage with Biblical mythology as *mythology*.⁵⁸

In the North American context, the tendency was traditionally to interpret the Baal Cycle more in contrast with Israelite religion in a kind of evolutionary axis, from the primitive mythicism of the former to the developing historical consciousness of the latter (W. F. Albright 1968, J. Gray 1965, F. M. Cross 1973, R. Alter 1981).⁵⁹ Even though strides have been made in the translation and the interpretation of the texts, both the pre-war and the post-war studies suffer from ideological baggage that only the research of the last few decades has begun to unravel, while doubtless colouring them with the biases of our own era.⁶⁰ But the ideological climate during which Ugaritic studies were founded (the Second World War) and came into prominence (the Cold War) are not insignificant, especially given the motif of combat that seemingly lies at the centre of the myth.⁶¹ It may be that we view the concept of combat and struggle more central to the myth than did the Bronze Age recipient, to whom the principal content of the story, I argue, was the kingship of Baal. The tendency in Ugaritic research following the 1980s has been towards broader, synthetic studies on the one hand, and on studies examining particular divinities on the other, often combining them with the methodologies of adjacent sciences.⁶²

The possible link between the Combat Myth and royal ideology has also gained popularity in recent years, especially following the publication of the letter of Zimri-Lim of Mari mentioning the Storm-God and the sea by J.-M. Durand (1993), in *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* (MARI) 7. The theory

⁵⁷ Wyatt 2005b, 697.

⁵⁸ Wyatt 1996, 373ff.

⁵⁹ The divide between European and North American Biblical and Ugaritic studies is long recognized. For discussion, see Smith 2001b.

⁶⁰ For a study on the myths of power in history, see Samuel & Thompson 1990. The parts on the making of myths and the myths of 'Nationhood and minorities' are especially relevant.

⁶¹ On ideology, see e.g. Plamenatz 1970; Eagleton 1991. Ideology has sometimes been defined as a false consciousness or an ensemble of interconnected ideas that are categorically mistaken, a government of logical and intellectual processes imagined by the obfuscated masses. See Barr 2000, 105. I do not subscribe to this definition of ideology, but rather understand it as a set of interconnected ideas serving the purpose of impressing a set of social mores and virtues onto its designed audience. Ideology is not a false consciousness, but a *shared* consciousness.

⁶² The effects of the Second World War on Ugaritic scholarship have been discussed by Smith 2001b, 36; Vidal 2014. Sasson 1998, 454, also discussed the early years of the research into Mari texts in the shadows of the Second World War, and how the history of the city and its king were fashioned as a kind of morality tale.

propounded perhaps most successfully by Wyatt holds that the NWS Combat Myth had a political function, the purpose of which was to use mytho-religious language to propagate and strengthen royal ideology. The topic has been approached by him in various works, but especially in his 1996 *Myths of Power: a study of royal myth and ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical tradition*. Other works in which he expounds on the theory include the *Ugarit Forschungen* 37 article “The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit”, his 1987 *Aula Orientalis* article “Who Killed the Dragon?”, and his 1995 *Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas* article “The Significance of *Špn* in West Semitic Thought”.

Wyatt, while perhaps the most prolific proponent of the theory, awards the coining of it to Smith’s 1986 *Ugarit Forschungen* article “Interpreting the Ba’al Cycle”. Smith discussed the possible political use of the myth in a footnote to the article, which in itself is a rather convincing establishment of Baal’s kingship as one of the main themes of the cycle.⁶³ Smith also expounded on the theory in his 1990 book *The Early History of God: Yahweh and Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, and in his 1994 *Ugaritish-Biblische Literatur* article “Mythology and Myth-making in Ugaritic and Israelite literatures”, wherein he connected this political use of the Combat Myth to texts of the HB, particularly the psalms. Smith’s most significant contribution to Ugaritic studies, however, remains his two volume (out of a planned three) ‘Behemoth’, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (1994, 2009⁶⁴), an indispensable aid to any study of the Ugaritic epic. My examination builds on the works of these two esteemed scholars, wherefore I have discussed their positions and my divergence from them in more detail in section 2.2.2. The most recent comprehensive analysis of the combat myth traditions is Debra Scoggins Ballentine’s *The Conflict Myth & the Biblical Tradition* (2015) in which she both explores the ideological function of the various ANE conflict myths and calls into question the description of the mythic adversary as chaos. Unfortunately, I have not been able to incorporate the work into this thesis which was for all pertinent parts finished before the book was published.

The connection between the Combat Myth and kingship is considered almost a given by certain researchers of the ANE, particularly Wyatt and Smith.⁶⁵

⁶³ In Smith 1997a, 84–85, he further elaborates that the obvious political use of the myth in Mari gives reason enough to suspect that it was in political use also in Ugarit.

⁶⁴ Co-authored with W. T. Pitard.

⁶⁵ E.g. Scurlock 2013b, 261: “The issue of legitimacy is centre stage in the Ugaritic Ba’al epic, with Yam, El’s first choice for sovereignty, being narrowly defeated by Ba’al, who

Often mention is also made of this myth having been used to legitimize the king's power without any explanation of why and how the myth would have been used in this fashion, or what exactly is meant by legitimation. This is often based on certain broadly drawn and rather loose parallels. A good example of studies taking the metanarrative as given is the article collection edited by Ben Zvi and Levin (2014), in which most of the articles use a paragraph to reiterate the credo of the (Storm) god having battled chaos to establish order for the legitimization of kingship, as though it were a fact universally acknowledged (e.g. Wilson p. 133, Müller p. 257,⁶⁶ Sabo p. 410).

The assertion is not explanatory; it merely states a matter of fact that is somehow presumed to be self-evident. There is also something almost tautological about the argument that the myth had a political function because the Storm-God was the dynastic god and because the Storm-God was the dynastic god the myth had a political function. And yet it does not explain how or why the myth came to be used in this way. Rather than establishing parallels, my interest lies more in the understanding of *how* the myth functioned as a legitimating agent. As Sasson pointed out, language controls the way narratives are shaped (along with the related concepts of script and media), and it is not coincidental that we find this particular form of the narrative *solely* among NWS texts.⁶⁷ In fact, one of Bonnet & Merlo's pre-conditions for successful and legitimate comparative studies was that the cultural milieux under investigation are comparable and shared attested historical contacts.⁶⁸

It often happens that the material chosen for comparison with Biblical and Ugaritic texts is too generic to be of much use, their parallels mainly thematic. The differences between the traditions are also not always given their due attention or their unique characteristics respected enough. In comparative studies, it is important to consider both the similarities and the differences, as similarities

subsequently fails in his attempt to take over the netherworld from Mot".

⁶⁶ The same credo may also be found in the conclusions of Müller 2008, 247, which is paradigmatic of the view and deserves to be quoted in full: "Vor diesem Hintergrund [the connection between the Storm-God and the dynasties of the Upper Mesopotamian kingdoms] legt es sich nahe, nicht nur die ältesten Stücke über Jahwe als Wettergott, sondern auch ihre königstheologischen Überformungen auf politische Vorgänge zurückführen". What these political aspects were he does not elaborate.

⁶⁷ Sasson (2005, 216) also discussed the way Semitic languages are poor in abstraction, ambiguous syntactically, and use circumlocution more frequently than Sumerian or the ancient Indo-European dialects. In contrast to other traditions, ancient Semitic narratives also avoided physical descriptions and character-based introspection.

⁶⁸ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79.

may suggest a common cultural heritage or cognitive environment rather than direct dependence.⁶⁹ It is not uncommon to find similarities on the surface and differences at the conceptual level, or vice versa. It is also vital that all elements under examination are understood in their own context as accurately as possible before cross-cultural comparisons are made.⁷⁰ I have attempted to respect these limitations. The texts that I have chosen for examination in this study are ancient Semitic, and the non-Semitic texts are used to contrast (not supplement) the predominantly NWS traditions.

The connection between NWS kingship and the NWS form of the Combat Myth in particular has not yet been satisfactorily examined using systematic analyses, particularly outside of the HB. Nor have the methods of exegesis been more than occasionally or intermittently employed in the study of the Ugaritic texts, where comparison within the texts of the Ugaritic corpus may still yield many answers.⁷¹ The approach of comparing and contrasting the textual traditions is one of the latest trends in Ugaritic and Biblical studies,⁷² and it is in the context of this approach that the current investigation can also be situated. It must be emphasized that in examining the mythological legitimization of power, my concern is primarily with the officially sanctioned “state religion” or “establishment religion”, as opposed to popular religion.⁷³ While popular religion may have shared many of the conceptions of officially sanctioned cults in the NWS cultural sphere, it left few literary traces. The effects of popular religion on royal ideology must also have been negligible, while on the other hand, influence from royal cults must have made forays into popular religion.

There are broadly two functionalist theories for interpreting myths, which interpret mythology as having a definite function in societies. The first considers myth to reflect a culture’s natural phenomena, and the other its social organization and rituals. A myth is understood as having a limited role, the identification of

⁶⁹ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79.

⁷⁰ So also Tsumura 2005; Tugendhaft 2013, 194.

⁷¹ Korpel 1998 discussed the Baal Cycle from an exegetical framework, but this is a short communication originally written for a joint meeting of SOTS and *Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap* at Oxford, the theme of which was ‘intertextuality’. In the paper she argued against the composite (or ‘diachronic’) character of the Baal Cycle, which is a position I disagree with.

⁷² Outlined by Smith 2002a, 23ff. According to Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 80, the comparative method is also necessarily a contrasting method.

⁷³ The concept of popular religion has been examined by Ackerman 1992. See Dever 2005, 5–9, on “state” and “folk” religion as two complementary dimensions of ancient religion.

which serves to explain the myth.⁷⁴ The Baal Cycle has been interpreted using both functionalist theories, albeit the explanation from natural phenomena seems in recent years to have given way to the theory of the myth justifying social organization through the theme of order and chaos – the ordering of society by controlling the chaotic elements of existence, discussed in Chapter 2. Petersen & Woodward believed that the logical structure of the functionalist theories severely limits their explanatory abilities. This is why they advanced a structuralist paradigm for the interpretation of myths, following the position of C. Levi-Strauss presented in his 1963 article “The Structural Study of Myth”,⁷⁵ in which all mythology presents a coherent logical system. Petersen & Woodward developed a method of examining and analysing the relational structures of myths.⁷⁶

While I am not entirely convinced that ANE mythology can be described as “highly complex phenomena” – it raises the question of ‘compared to what?’ – or that ancient Israelite religion should be considered a “complex religion” compared with the likes of the religion of ancient Ugarit, the former of which would have incorporated and altered “entire complexes of relations” into a previously existing structure, their discussion is not without merit. I take them to mean that ancient Israelite religion would have adopted NWS conceptions more or less wholesale, and adapted them to fit some previously existing core conceptions of “Israelite religion”.⁷⁷ Adaptation, demythologization and depersonification of NWS mythology for the use of Hebrew poetry seem to have been popular ways of dealing with the similarities in the Hebrew and Ugaritic poetic corpora in research. This approach was favoured, e.g. by Craigie, Anderson, Cassuto, and Weiser.

The problem with this view is that we have no idea what this Israelite

⁷⁴ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234.

⁷⁵ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234–345, Levi-Strauss 1963. On p. 206 Levi-Strauss states that the logic of mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science, with the only difference being the nature of the things to which this logic is applied. I cannot agree with this position, as the very fact that these ancient writers were not *authoring* scientific treatises, but were often compiling and editing mytho-poetic materials with an oral prehistory of varying length, making their internal logic often fundamentally different from that of a modern scientific monograph. One of the things separating mythology from other more secular texts is that it does not have adhere to the constraints of logical thought. What they may have had – and likely did have – was internal consistency. At its most basic definition, logic is concerned with the truth, falseness, or contingency of formal propositions. Criticism of Levi-Strauss has been presented by, e.g. Diamond 1972 and Rogerson 1974.

⁷⁶ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 236.

⁷⁷ On the adoption of ‘Canaanite’ mythological and theological language, see Hutton 2007, 274, 295. Spieckermann 1989 also saw ‘Canaanite’ conceptions later expanded and made to fit into the temple theology of the Israelites as underlying the process of the formation of the psalms.

religion prior to, or apart from, the influence of the broader NWS religious conceptions would have entailed or whether there even existed such a thing to begin with. A single culture will rarely be monolithic, either in a contemporary cross-section or in consideration of the passage of time. It is more logical to suggest that “Israelite religion” was the product of a certain set of NWS religious conceptions under the influence of several neighbouring cultures (from some of which we may not have any, or very little, historical record preserved for us), which developed during a certain time at a certain place.

It was not Israelite religion that incorporated and altered NWS religious concepts into its previously existing structure. Israelite religion is by and large the product of the localized generation, alteration, and adaptation of NWS religious “complexes of relations”, one among many. The localization of the mythologies that had once been disseminated from the cult centre of the Yamhadian capital of Aleppo in the international LBA happened during the period of system collapses in the ANE, when politically and culturally all the cities of the eastern Mediterranean drew in and were confined to smaller spheres of cultural contact. This transformation of the mythological material seems to have happened not only in the area of Palestine, but in many of the other eastern Mediterranean polities as well.⁷⁸

Petersen & Woodward emphasized that their relational structure model of interpreting myths is not intended to display the cognitive processes (which is to say, logic) of the individuals who wrote the myth, but instead to display the logic or structure of the myths or cosmologies.⁷⁹ While there are certainly some benefits to applying their model to the examination of myths, their approach seems to sidestep some important facets of ancient myths, the authorship of the myths not the least among them. Ancient myths were seldom if ever the work of individual writers, making the depiction of the individual cognitive process underlying them indeed an exercise in futility.⁸⁰ More problematic is their apparent assumption that we can take a myth in a crystallized or finalized form for the examination and analysis of relational structures as though it existed without its context.

While an individual version of a myth may have been preserved for us

⁷⁸ Chase-Dunn & Anderson 2005.

⁷⁹ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 237.

⁸⁰ Korpel 1998, 87, “‘Authors’ were not the unique creators of highly original literary works, but rather links in long chains of tradition. Yet they enjoyed so much freedom in molding the traditional material as they saw fit that they might be called ‘editing authors’”.

crystallized in a literary form, a myth is never “done”. It may have existed in countless, however slightly different, forms, changing from narrator to narrator and context to context, with no guarantee that its internal logic or relational structures would have remained unchanged. It is not possible to examine the relational structure or logic of a myth, only of a particular literal version of it. I also do not agree with their position that mythology comprises an “extremely complex system”,⁸¹ which again raises the question of ‘as compared with what?’ Mythologies are systems, to be sure, the complexities of which increase with the passing of time. But this is the nature of systems, and the extreme complexity of mythological systems is wholly dependent on the comparative framework.

I do not deny a tool such as the relational structure model may be beneficial for the study of mythology, and indeed offers some insight into the similarities and dissimilarities between Baal’s relationship with the Ugaritic pantheon and Yahweh’s relationship with other divine beings in the HB, but they also reflect the complex relational structures of ancient families and tribes, the village societies. Reductionism is a useful tool for analysis, but it can be employed only so far before it results in the loss of data. As it is, the Petersen & Woodward relational model only really works to elucidate their individual interpretation and reading of the texts, interesting though they are. I also do not agree with their conclusion,⁸² which states that a “crucial element present in Ugaritic cosmology”, being the allocation relationship, which in the Ugaritic texts is represented by El’s allocation of the rule of the microcosm to Baal, is missing from the Yahwistic system. In the “Yahwistic system”, this allocation relationship exists between Yahweh and the king – while in the Ugaritic texts, it is the allocation relationship between the king and Baal that is (textually, although probably not factually) absent. And yet this allocation relationship they discuss is an important facet of the myth, and may betray its origins in the Amorite political system (discussed in Chapter 4).

According to Foucault, it is particularly state institutions that elaborate, rationalize, and centralize power, and it is as a state institution that I discuss NWS kingship. A note must be made, however, that according to him it was only the 16th century CE that saw the formation of the new political structure of ‘state’, envisioned as a political instrument that ignores individuals in favour of the

⁸¹ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 237.

⁸² Petersen & Woodward 1977, 248.

totality.⁸³ According to Foucault, the strength of the power of the state, as opposed to earlier forms of government, comes from its concurrent individualization techniques and totalizing procedures of power.⁸⁴ The state apparatus as such did not exist in the ancient world, and we must be careful not read one into the bureaucracies and economies of the Iron Age. But how political power was negotiated in the ancient world is an on-going investigation, and it is into this discourse that I hope, in a small way, to enter with this investigation within the theoretical framework outlined here.

1.4 The Three-Pronged Structure of the Study

The textual materials that I examine in this investigation feature primary sources from Ugarit and Mari, with minor attention paid to other comparable materials from the ANE, such as Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and Hittite-Hurrian myths, as well as other mytho-poetic compositions in the Akkadian and Sumerian languages. I compare them with the poetic materials of the HB, found mostly in the Psalter and the prophetic books. I have divided the texts possibly referencing the Combat Myth into three categories, although I recognize that the division is somewhat arbitrary and that there exists overlap between the categories: 1) texts alluding to the *North West Semitic* Combat Myth, 2) texts alluding to the *Babylonian (or hybrid)* Combat Myth, and 3) references to the Combat Myth in *non-mythological narrative texts*.⁸⁵

We may be able to distinguish two traditions, which I have designated as NWS and Babylonian-Hybrid, not so much based on differences in the basic narrative, but on whether the aspect of creation features in the myth.⁸⁶ Creation may have implicitly been read into the palace building scene of the Baal Cycle, but the association is problematic. It is the author's conviction that the aspects of

⁸³ Frankfort 1948, 30–58, discussed the ancient Egyptian state, beginning with the observation that the Egyptian language had no word for this concept, which would have been meaningless and non-sensical to the Egyptians.

⁸⁴ Foucault 1982, 782, 792.

⁸⁵ Tugendhaft 2013, 193, asserts that if there is little “fundamental difference between the mythical attestations of the combat motif in Ugarit and Babylon” the question of which provided the “more direct” source for the HB referents is a secondary concern. I disagree, because the ideological contexts of these sources are vastly different.

⁸⁶ The differences between the Ugaritic and Babylonian myths were discussed by Smith 1994, xxv–xxvi, especially regarding the different characterization of Baal and Marduk.

creation did not feature in the oldest Amorite traditions of the myth, but witness to the influence of the Sumerian mythic traditions on the Akkadian/Babylonian development of the narrative. There is also a special case of references to the Combat Myth in the indirect allusions found in texts that owe influence to *Mesopotamian royal inscriptions* (= 3),⁸⁷ which ultimately draw their imagery and language from the Combat Myth.⁸⁸

This study is, however, not structured around these purported sources of the myth in the HB, but around the three major groups of textual witnesses to the traditions. The investigation begins with the **OB witnesses** predominantly from Mari (Chapter 4), which consist of archaeological, inscriptional, and epistolary evidence. In section 4.3 I investigate the witnesses pertaining to the reign of Zimri-Lim, in section 4.2 those from the reign of Yahdun-Lim, and in section 4.4 the overall mythologization process of the tradition in connection with the Mariote Ordeal by River, with texts ranging from the reign of Zimri-Lim to the Middle Assyrian legal texts and Neo-Assyrian myths.

The next major textual witnesses are from **Ugarit** (Chapter 5). In addition to the Baal Cycle (discussed in section 5.1), other Ugaritic texts and iconography are examined. To tie this section in with the previous, attention is devoted to the question of how well the mythological texts from Ugarit reflect the political organization of the OB Amorite kingdoms.⁸⁹ The topics in the section range from the use of the term Beloved as a royal epithet in NWS texts and its use in the royal adoption scene (section 5.1.2), the tradition of a list of water courses transmitted as a list of monsters slain by the goddess Anat in which the Combat Myth becomes a feature of symbolic geography (section 5.1.4), the portrayal of the god Yamm as a winged deity in his role as the mediator of kingship in Syrian iconography (section 5.3), and the concept of the enthronement of the deity upon the waters (section 5.4).

In the last section I review the witnesses of the previous two sections against the development of the mythology in its **broader ANE context** (Chapter

⁸⁷ Particularly Ex 23:31, 15:1–18, 20–21, Am 8:12, Zech 9:4, 10, 14:8, Ez 3:7, 28:2, Est 10:1, Jo 2:20, Mic 7:12, 19, Ez 26:3, 5, 16–18, 27:3, 9, 29, 32, 47:8, 10, 15, 17–20, 28, Pss. 18:16–17, 24:2, 46:2, 72:8, 74:13–14, 80:11, 89:10–11, 26, 93:2–4, 106:9, Job 7:12, 9:8, 26:12, 38:9–11, Cant 8:7, Prov 8:29, Jer 5:22, 25:22, Is 23:2, 51:9–10, Neh. 9:11, Hab 3:8–10, 15, Dan 11:45.

⁸⁸ Grayson 1987, 3, defined Mesopotamian royal inscriptions as “declaration by the ruler himself, an absolute monarch, of his intentions and achievements”, which concern mostly “building and military accomplishments, palaces erected, and foreign lands conquered”.

⁸⁹ Studied recently by B. Lafont, *Relations internationales, alliances et diplomatie au temps des royaumes amorrites. Essai de synthèse*. Amurru 2 (2001). 254–261.

6). I examine both precursors (section 6.2.1) and successors to the Amorite tradition (section 6.3.1–6.3.4), and other witnesses of the NWS cultural sphere (section 6.2–6.3). The Hittite (section 6.2.2), Egyptian (section 6.5), and Mesopotamian (section 6.4.1) mythic traditions are discussed in order to discover the unique characteristics of the NWS tradition. The process of the on-going mythologization of the tradition is also offset by an examination of the alternative development of the tradition in the political propaganda of Mesopotamian monarchs in the form of royal inscriptions (section 6.4.2). The pertinent Biblical witnesses suggested to the tradition are discussed in connection with the aforementioned topics.

While Gunkel focused his thesis on the similarity between *EE* and Gen 1, he also discussed traces of what he called the ‘Chaos Battle Myth’ elsewhere in the HB. The texts in which he saw influences of the myth include Is 30:7, 59:9–10, Pss. 40:5, 87:4, 89:10–14, Job 9:13, 26:12–13 (Rahab), Pss. 74:12–19, 104:25–28, Is. 27:1, Job 3:8, 40:25–41:26 (Leviathan), Job 40:19–24, 1 Enoch 60:7–9, 4 Ezra 6:49–52, Is. 30:6ff, Ps. 68:31 (Behemoth), Job 7:12, Ps. 44:20, Ez 29:3–6a, 32:2–7, Jer 51:34, 36, 42, Psalms of Solomon 2:28b–34 (Tannin), Am 9:2–3 (the serpent), Ps. 18:16–18, 33:6–8, 46, 65:7–8, 77:17, 93:3–4, 104:5–9, Job 38:8–11, Is 17:12–14, 50:2b–3, 59:15–20, Jer 5:22b, 31:35, Hab 3:8, Nah 1:4, Prov 8:22–31, Sir 43:(25)23, Prayer of Manasseh 2–4 (the sea).⁹⁰ Many of the passages discussed by him also feature the sea, but it was not the concept of the sea so much as the presence of the dragon or a sea-serpent that he used in identifying the referents.⁹¹

Following Gunkel, the most thorough examinations of the traces of the Combat Myth in the HB have been done by Day and Wyatt. Day identified 44 instances of the myth being referenced (many of which had already been discussed by Gunkel, here in **Bold**): Pss. **18:5–18**, 24, 29, **33:7–8**, **44:19–20**, **46:3–6**, **65:7–8**, **68:23**, **30**, **74:12–17**, **77:17–21**, **87:4**, **89:10–15**, **93**, **104:1–9**; **24–26**, 144:5–7, Job **3:8**, **7:12**, **9:5–14**, **38:8–11**, **40:15–41**, Ex 15:1–18, **Prov 8:24**, **27–29**, Is 8:5–8, **17:12–14**, 24–27, **27:1**, **30:7**, 51:9–11, **Jer 5:22b**, **31:35**, **51:34**, **Nah 1:4**, Ez **29:3–5**, **32:2–8**, Hab **3:8–10**, 15, Dan 7, and Gen **1:2**, **6–10**,

⁹⁰ For a summary of his findings, see Gunkel 2006, 53–57.

⁹¹ Although recognizing the linguistic affinity between Tiamat and *tehôm*, Gunkel saw *tehôm* or the deep in the Hebrew tradition as the place in which the serpent dwelled, not a creature as such.

26⁹² to which Wyatt, disagreeing with Day's assessment of some of the references, added 8 more: Pss. 2, 8, 68:23, 72:8, **74:13–15**, **89:13**, 26, 106:9, 110, Job 9:8, 26:7, 12, Is 14:13, **27:1**, 51:9–10, Ez 28:2, and Jon 2.⁹³ As a more recent development, Batto defined as Biblical passages “with patent combat myth motifs” – which is to say, the passages with the most iron-clad arguments for reading the motif in them – as Pss. **74:13–17**, **89:9–13**, Job 9:5–10, and **26:7–13**.⁹⁴

My intention is not to add to this list. Nor is it my intention to claim that the list is exhaustive, as the discovery of further texts pertaining to these traditions will undoubtedly adjust our views in the future. What I intend is to create a new framework for the interpretation of the texts, into which we can place the texts in order to discuss their function in the societies that created, used, and traded these texts. While I may not agree on every aspect of the interpretation of these verses or their assigned *loci*, clearly remnants, references, allusions, traces, and echoes of this myth have been retained in the Biblical record. My intention is to examine the ways in which these references can help us understand how this myth may have been used in the legitimization of ancient Israelite kingship.

It is important to emphasize that the references were not employed in the texts of the HB all in the same fashion. While some of them may hark back to originally Hebrew conceptions (or indeed localized myths in the area of Palestine that were woven into Hebrew literature), others were adopted and inserted into Hebrew texts at different times and for different reasons. The non-native, inserted traditions most likely also came to the attention of the Hebrew authors through different channels. But it is the conviction of the author that it was the ancient native traditions of the Palestinian monarchies that facilitated the easy adoption of the non-native traditions in later times, inherent due to their similarity born from similar function.

While the Amorite kingdoms of Syria and Northern Mesopotamia fell into the hands of the Mitanni and Hittite empires in the LBA (1625–1200), ancient Mari did not. The texts from Mari, the city having already been destroyed at this

⁹² Day 1985. There is some understandable overlap in his categories. In addition to the Creation-Chaos myth, he divided the Biblical references into the naturalization, historicization, and the eschatologization of the motif.

⁹³ Wyatt 1996, 122. Although he considered them additions to Day's discussion of the topic, some of Wyatt's suggestions had already been discussed by Day. The new additions from him included Pss. 2, 8, and 110.

⁹⁴ See Batto 2013, 231–232 for arguments and discussion. It should be pointed out that all of these passages name monstrous creatures.

time, were left unaffected by these waves of conquest, its archives buried. The archives of Ugarit were likewise buried, crystallizing the textual tradition as it existed during the fall of the Hittite empire. Therefore it could also be argued that where the evidence of Mari agrees with its Syrian and Palestinian counterparts, affected also by the frequent Egyptian presence in these areas in the Middle Bronze Age [henceforth MBA], we may begin to uncover traces of anything approaching ‘authentic’ NWS tradition. Toward this end, it may be beneficial to examine units of poetry stripped of their later additions, harmonizing, editing, and streamlining of text, where such is possible, conceivably with the help of the Septuagint, the Qumran Psalms scroll (11QPs^a),⁹⁵ and the Samaritan Pentateuch, all of which may exhibit variant (and occasionally *potior*) readings to the Masoretic text.⁹⁶

Of the Biblical verses I have selected for examination in this dissertation, the verses I have categorized as having been influenced by the hybrid Babylonian Combat Myth are examined in section 6.4.1, whereas those influenced by Mesopotamian royal inscriptions are examined in section 6.4.2. The verses that seem to have been influenced by the NWS Combat Myth, on the other hand, are examined throughout Chapters 4–6, as they comprise the main body of evidence for the thesis. The division that I have devised is somewhat different from Gunkel’s, Day’s, and Wyatt’s not because of any major disagreement on my part on the sources of the referents in the texts, especially according to the latter two scholars, but based on the degree to which the texts are removed from the native traditions employed by the Palestinian monarchies.

⁹⁵ Psalm texts from Qumran actually consist of 40 scrolls and manuscripts from 8 different caves and two other locations besides (Masada and Naḥal Ḥever), but 11QPs^a from Cave 11, copied ca. 50 CE, is the main witness, having the most verses preserved (containing verses from most of Pss. 101–154 and Sirach 51 as well as some psalm compositions not found in the Masoretic text). For a list of individual manuscripts, see Flint 1998, 454; for the order of the Pss. in the Large Psalms Scroll, see p. 458. Note that the Qumran Psalms Scroll was copied but not compiled at Qumran.

⁹⁶ Joosten 2013a, 117, however, pointed out that while the Qumran texts have brought a lot to the diachronic study of HB texts, they have also raised questions of dialect diversity that must be addressed in comparative studies of the texts. According to him the scrolls have given rise to two approaches that are in tension with one another: the chronological and the dialectological.

1.5 Texts Omitted from Examination

It would be disingenuous to claim that all poetic mentions of the sea in the HB were somehow connected to the ANE Combat Myth.⁹⁷ The following verses, enumerated in the footnotes for reference, also employ the word “sea” in the fashion of *a poetic metaphor*.⁹⁸ Not all *anthropomorphizing or mythologization of the sea* bespeaks an understanding of the sea as a divinity or as an antagonist for Yahweh. Oftentimes the anthropomorphizing of natural phenomena merely bespeaks of a rich and colourful poetic tradition, as in the cases of 1 Chr 16:32. The following verses, on the other hand, are undoubtedly tapping into the well of NWS mythology, but bear no overt connection to kingship: Gen 1:21, Am 9:3. The phrase *roaring of the sea*⁹⁹ occupies a space between the natural understanding of the sea and its anthropomorphization. There are instances where the roaring of the sea, which is a violent image, may have alluded to the Combat Myth, but there is no reason to assume that all references to a poetically expressed natural phenomenon need refer to the Combat Myth specifically.

And sometimes, of course, the sea is just the sea, a vast body of water. In Biblical texts, we can find the sea being used as an ordinary *geographic designation*¹⁰⁰ (this is especially true of cases where a specific sea is named and mentioned, or where the word sea is used in connection with a known geographic location – some of the passages in this group may be employing phrases of royal inscriptions), and as a *natural element* (as a natural body of water that is geographically unspecified, often in relation to merchant seafarers).¹⁰¹ The sea as a natural element also has some convenient subcategories, such as in the construct phrases *sand of the sea*,¹⁰² *waves of the sea*,¹⁰³ *waters of the sea*,¹⁰⁴ and

⁹⁷ Trudinger 2001, 30, colourfully described the tendency to detect the mythic pattern in Biblical texts as being akin to “rabbits in the Australian bush”, to be found in texts “whenever references to a water-being and the architecture of the cosmos occurred in proximity to each other”. The criticism is sound, which is why I have devised conditions that a text must meet in order to be considered as a mythic remnant.

⁹⁸ Prov 30:19; Lam 2:13; Ecc 1:7; Is 21:1; Ps. 65:5.

⁹⁹ We find the phrase in Pss. 96:11; 98:7; Jer 6:23; 31:35; 50:42; Is 5:30; 51:15; 1 Chr 16:32.

¹⁰⁰ Gen 14:3; 14:2; 14:9; 10:19; Num 13:29; 14:25; 21:4; 33:8; 33:10; 33:11; Dt 1:40; 2:1; Jdg 11:16; 5:17; 1 Kgs 5:9; 9:26; 2 Chr 8:18; 20:2; Josh 24:6; Ez 39:11; Jer 46:18; 49:23; Is 9:1; 11:11; Nah 3:8; Zeph 2:5; 2:6.

¹⁰¹ Dt 30:13; 1 Kgs 9:27; 18:43; 18:44; Ps. 104:25; 107:23; Prov 23:34; Ecc1:7; 11:1; Is 18:2; 42:10; Hag 2:6; Ez 27:26; 27:34.

¹⁰² Jer 33:22; Is 10:22; Gen 32:12; 41:49; 2 Sam 17:11; Hos 1:10; 1. Sam 13:5.

¹⁰³ Is 48:18; Ps 107:25; 107:29.

¹⁰⁴ Gen 1:22; Is. 11:9; 57:20; Hab 2:14; Am 5:8; 9:6. N.B. the reference to the supercaelian sea in the last two verses.

fish/quail/abundance of the sea,¹⁰⁵ which is often paralleled with “birds of the sky”.¹⁰⁶ Of the psalm passages, the ones which seem to describe the sea as a purely natural phenomenon are Pss. 65:6 and 69:35, which Gottlieb associated with the cultic suffering of the king for and because of Yahweh,¹⁰⁷ as well as 96:11 and 98:7.

While these verses do have a tendency to anthropomorphize the sea either by the use of a verb, its employment in poetic metaphor, or by alluding to emotion (‘roaring’, ‘raging’, ‘praising’¹⁰⁸), they have very little relevance to the topic of this study – be as it may that Cassuto, for example, suggested that the noise made by the sea is one of the features of the Combat Myth. The word רעם used in the Biblical verses has been connected to the sound of thunder.¹⁰⁹ The basis for the claim is unclear, as the sound of the sea is not featured as an aspect of the myth in the Ugaritic texts, nor is the sound of the sea mentioned in the letters from Mari. The complete subjugation of the angry sea may also be read into the verses. But such vague and unsubstantiated links can only be used in the examination of the evidence if they are found in a cluster of motifs and key -terminology, but as they stand on their own, they add very little to the topic under investigation.

On the cusp of presenting the sea as a natural element and a mythological concept is the *sea as an aspect of creation*.¹¹⁰ The passages where the tripartite division of the Pre-Ptolemaic¹¹¹ universe into heaven, earth and sea is featured

¹⁰⁵ Gen 1:26; 1:28; 9:2; Lev 11:9-10; Num 11:22; Ps. 8:8; Hab 1:14; Zeph 1:3; 11:31; Hos 4:3; Ez 38:20; Is 60:5. The *abundance of the sea* has an Akkadian equivalent in *šu-muḫ ta-ma-te* (e.g. KAR 6 obv. II 35), featured in a text about the destruction of the flood dragon.

¹⁰⁶ The phrase “fish of the sea and bird of the sky” is found in the vassal treaty SAA 2 13 iii 1–2 (possibly Esarhaddon’s). Lines 1–7 feature the following: *lu-u ina ŠU.2 KU₆ šá tam-tim lu-u ina ŠU.2 MUŠEN šá AN-e la ta-šap-par šum-ma at-ta ta-qab-bu-u-ni [ma]-a a-lik a-na LUGAL am-mi-e qi-bi [ma-a] an-nu-rig LUGAL^{KUR} aš-sur [ina] UGU-ḫi-ka il-la-ka* – You will not write **through a fish of the sea or a bird of the sky**, (you swear that) you will not say: “Go to that king and say ‘Now the king of Assyria marches against you!’”. While the Biblical phrase is probably a stock phrase of ancient Semitic poetic language, it is possible that the parallel phrase draws from Esarhaddon’s vassal treaties in some occurrences based on other lexical correspondents discussed subsequently. Influence from the NWS sphere to the Assyrian context is also not out of the question since the phrase is a *hapax* in the Neo-Assyrian corpus according to Robert Whiting (personal communication).

¹⁰⁷ Gottlieb 1980, 89.

¹⁰⁸ Albeit according to Klein 1987, 132, the verb *hll* can have the meaning of boasting. The Ugaritic cognate verb however has the meaning of praising and cheering.

¹⁰⁹ Cassuto 1943, 121–142.

¹¹⁰ Found in Pss. 95:5; 146:6; Ex 20:11.

¹¹¹ Wyatt 2003, 146, pointed out that during the Pre-Ptolemaic era the earth was understood as a flat disc surrounded by the cosmic sea, which reached not only above the cupola of the sky but also the netherworld underneath the earth disc. This conception of the world was shared by all peoples in the ANE.

Although notions of the spherical nature of the Earth had existed prior to the second century CE (e.g. in Pre-Socratic philosophy from the 6th century BCE, notably by Heraclitus,

may also be indicated in this category.¹¹² The sea as an aspect of creation can also be found in Ps. 146:6 where Yahweh is celebrated as “the maker of the heavens and the earth, and the sea and everything that is in it”. While the psalm is short and therefore most likely one of the older psalms and does contain vocabulary and terminology familiar from the Ugaritic texts (such as the parallelism of orphan and widow in v. 9), the concept of the Combat Myth seems absent from the psalm. Dahood, for example, proposed a parallel for 146:9–10 in KTU 1.2 IV 10.¹¹³ The aspect of creation is also evident in Ps. 95:5. Here the sea is an act of creation, paralleled by the formation of the earth out of clay. Its subjugation is absolute, as is that of other natural elements in the psalm, and there is an undeniable air of mythological thought to the passage. The psalm does reference Yahweh’s kingship, presenting these things as evidence of it, but if there is an allusion to the Combat Myth in his absolute ownership of the sea, it is extremely faint.

The Book of Jonah

The narrative in the book of Jonah presents us with a special case. The sea definitely plays a major role in the story, and there are undeniable mythological elements to the narrative. While the story of Jonah may contain echoes of the Combat Myth, it seems more pertinent as a witness to folk beliefs in a sea deity among the sea-faring coastal inhabitants. Jonah is a folk story, and as such is of limited value to the examination of the use of the Combat Myth as a narrative of political legitimation. The book has little connection to monarchy, unless the story

whose works survive only in quotations, e.g. in Aristotle; see W. Harris, *Heraclitus: The Complete Fragments, Translation and Commentary, and The Greek text* [1994]), it was not until the *Almagest* of the Alexandrian polymath Claudius Ptolemy that geocentrism (a globular earth as the centre of the universe) was accepted as the standard model. Ptolemy however used the observations of Babylonian astronomers in the construction of his model. See Crowe 1990. Tugendhaft 2012, 367, apparently made the mistake of equating the conception of the world prior to the Copernican revolution in European scientific thought with a belief in a flat earth (he states that no analogy between above and below is possible after the transition from Ptolemaic to Copernican thought, when in fact the transition was from a geocentric to a heliocentric worldview, not from flat-earth to round-earth – although it is possible that even heliocentrism was already suggested by Heraclitus, who described the sun as ‘that which never sets’), which is why I have used the term ‘Pre-Ptolemaic’ to refer to the idea of the world-disc in this study. Scientific cosmologies and mythological cosmogonies of course often exist side by side, and ‘the sky above’ and ‘the ground below’ are concepts still in use today.

¹¹² Stoltz 1999, 740; Tsumura 2005, 63–65. Tsumura contrasts this with the bi-partite division of the world into “heaven and earth”. Wyatt (1985) has seen Indo-European influence in the tripartite division of the world.

¹¹³ Dahood 1970, 341–342.

is read as a metaphor for the role of the Israelite king in the time of Shalmaneser III (and indeed there is terminology in the text that may ultimately derive from Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, such as the name Tarshish), but even if such satire or subversive political commentary had been intended by the authors, it does not offer us information on the use of the Combat Myth as a foundational myth for Israelite monarchy or on its use in the legitimation of political power.

While the word sea appears in the book of Jonah 12 times, with the singular determined form in Chapter 1 and the plural form in Chapter 2,¹¹⁴ I have chosen to omit the examination of the verses from the first chapter of Jonah in this study because they are featured in a prose narrative and therefore fall outside the scope of the thesis. The only portion of the book of Jonah that is examined is Jonah's prayer in Jon 2:2–9, which may contain material older than the framing narrative text. I discuss this passage in connection with the Mariote Ordeal by River in section 4.3.

The Brazen Sea of the Jerusalem Temple

Another special case is that of the 'molten' or 'brazen' sea (יָם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת/מִרְצָק).¹¹⁵ This molten sea was, according to the Biblical verses, a feature in the first temple of Jerusalem. According to 1 Kgs 7, the molten sea was a vessel 5 cubits in height and 10 cubits in diameter, holding 2000 baths of water, placed atop twelve bulls, also made of cast metal, and possibly symbolizing the twelve constellations.¹¹⁶ The Biblical texts do not mention the function of the installation, but libations or rituals of purity have been suggested (2 Chr 4:6 mentions that "the sea was for the priests to wash in", but the older account in Kings. makes no such mention. Furthermore, the height of the installation seems to speak against its use as a ritual bath).¹¹⁷ The Molten Sea has been connected to the Combat Myth, most prominently by Wyatt,¹¹⁸ but it was already discussed in connection with the myth

¹¹⁴ The first chapter uses the form יָם, the psalm of the second chapter uses the plural form יָמִים. The third and fourth chapters do not mention the sea.

¹¹⁵ It is mentioned in verses 1 Kgs 7:23, 24, 25, 39, 44 and in 2 Kgs 16:17; 25:13; 16; 1 Chr 18:8; 2 Chr 4:2–6; 10. Further mentions of the Brazen Sea can be found in Jer 27:19; 52:17 and 52:20.

¹¹⁶ Gunkel 2006^[1895], 101. According to him the bulls would have been laid out according to the cardinal directions.

¹¹⁷ See also Neh 2:13, containing an obscure reference to the "well of the Dragon" (עֵינַן הַתַּנִּין), an installation in the vicinity of the walls of Jerusalem.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Wyatt 2002, 353, where he likens the Sea of the Jerusalem temple to Apsu and Tiamat,

by Gunkel.¹¹⁹ According to Wyatt, Baal made his throne out of the carcass of Yamm after defeating him in the Ugaritic myth (based mostly on KTU 1.101), and he has suggested that this type of cultic installation may have alluded to the myth.¹²⁰

Gunkel argued that the Sea of the Jerusalem temple had been a Babylonian import, despite the heavy Phoenician influence on the construction of the temple. He also mentioned the royal inscription of Agum reporting the erection of an installation called the Sea (*tāmtu*) featuring the image of the ‘dragon’ in the temple of Marduk from c. 1500 BCE, and associated this with the erection of a possibly two-part installation called *apsu* (which he called ‘the cosmic sea’) by Urninâ of Lagash in the 4th millennium.¹²¹ He erroneously deduced from this evidence that the myth of Tiamat was already being told in the 4th millennium. We do not know whence the installations derived their *raison d’être*, but there is no need to assume that the mythological pretext for these installations was the same in the 4th (or mid-3rd) and the 2nd millennium. The latter may well have been influenced by the Amorite myth, while the former likely would not have been, especially regarding the putative Sargonic origin of the myth discussed subsequently. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence for such installations is lacking, so we cannot be certain they factually featured in these temples.

Gottlieb also suggested that the Molten Sea of 1 Kgs 23–26 would have been used in the actualization of the cultic myth of Yahweh’s battle with the sea in the Jerusalem temple.¹²² While the suggestion is interesting and certainly opens room for speculation, due to the scarcity of textual references to it and the lack of extra-Biblical evidence to corroborate even the existence of an installation of this kind in the Jerusalem temple, I fear that few inferences on its cultic use, function, purpose or connections to the Combat Myth or its relationship with the enthronement of kings can be made with any certainty. Therefore I have chosen to

carrying a symbolic burden.

¹¹⁹ Gunkel 2006^[1895], 100–101.

¹²⁰ Wyatt 1995, 212–215. The word *ym* does not feature in the text, but *k mdb*, “like the flood”, which seems to be likened unto his mountain, Saphon.

¹²¹ Gunkel 2006^[1895], 19, 100–101. He is referring to E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek: Sammlung von assyrischen und babylonischen Texten in Umschrift und Übersetzung* 3/1: *Historische Texte altbabylonischer Herrscher* (1892), 13, 143, translated by P. Jensen. The dating of the reign of the first king of the First Dynasty of Lagash was based on the chronology of the day and has been corrected since, the reign of Ur-Nanše falling to c. 2500 BCE. Even with the corrected chronology, his reign predates the time of Sargon.

¹²² Gottlieb 1980, 68. See Mowinkel 2004, 18–19, on the use of the psalms in the actualization of myth in the Israelite cult. De Moor (1990, 88) suggested that the myth of the Baal Cycle would likewise have been actualized annually in the Ugaritic cult.

forego examination of these passages in this study.

Some scholars, such as Stoltz, have, however, made connections between the concept of the primal sea and the temple.¹²³ It is of course possible to speculate that such a cultic installation would have featured in a hypothetical festival of enthronement of the king in Jerusalem in Pre-Exilic times. Some links could be made twixt the temple as the link between the human domain and the divine realm, earth and the heavens, as a model for the cosmos, or the symbols of the primal sea and the mountain converging in the idea of the temple. But demonstrating the factual basis for such assertions is quite another matter. We have no Biblical or extra-Biblical textual evidence to substantiate this type of speculation and therefore the concept is not discussed here.

1.6 Practical Minutiae

For the sake of clarity I have opted to use uniform spellings of the various ancient names referred to in this work, which in literatures ranging from the first century to the present have, over the years, found a multitude of different forms. Therefore I refer to the Ugaritic gods as Baal (*b 'l*), Yamm (*ym*), Asherat (*'lrt*), Ashtart (*atrt*), Ashtar (*attr*), Anat (*'nt*), El (*il*),¹²⁴ Mot (*mt*); to the Hebrew gods Yahweh (יהוה), Asherah (אֲשֶׁרָה), El (אֵל), Ashtoreth (עֲשֶׁתֶּרֶת); to the Phoenician goddess Astarte (*'štrt*) and god Melqart (*mlkqrt*), the Mesopotamian gods Ishtar, Marduk, Aššur, Adad, Tishpak, Enlil, Ea, and the Egyptian gods Re (*r^ḥ*), Apep (*'3pp*). The nominative markers in the Ugaritic and Hittite names have been discarded.

The translations of ancient texts that I have offered are as literal as possible, in an attempt to retain the characteristics and parallelism of the originals, thereby sometimes displaying poor or artificial sentence structure and grammatical aspects with regard to Idiomatic English. The translations of ancient texts (Hebrew, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Hittite, Greek, Latin, and Late Egyptian) have been made by the author with the help of the tools listed in the Lexica, unless otherwise indicated. Because I have translated both Sumerian and Akkadian texts, and in many cases bilinguals containing lines from both languages in the same text, Sumerian words are transcribed in CAPITAL LETTERS (with grammatical

¹²³ Stoltz 1999, 738–740.

¹²⁴ On the vocalization of El in the Ugaritic language, see Albright 1934, 109.

elements in normal, non-italicized letters) while Akkadian words are indicated in *italics*. Established translations have been consulted where applicable, and my deviation from them is often indicated in the footnotes.

I must also impress that in this work I use terms such as North West Semitic,¹²⁵ Semitic, Hebrew, Akkadian, Amorite,¹²⁶ Egyptian, Sumerian, etc. not as ethnic designations, but as linguistic designations, to mark the speakers of a certain language or dialect.¹²⁷ On the other hand, in the case of Judahites,

¹²⁵ I also use the term NWS where the term Canaanite was traditionally used. Canaanite, originally an Egyptian designation for the inhabitants of the Levantine littoral (Jidejian 1992, 24, although there may have been a mention in the Mari texts, juxtaposing ‘the thieves and the kinahnu’, preceding the Amarna letters by hundreds of years [see Dossin 1973], but this brief mention does not seem to be a widespread ethnic designation), is somewhat of a problematic term, especially when contrasted with ‘ancient Israel’ (see Smith 2002a, 21–22; Grabbe 1994), so I have opted to use the designation NWS (largely synonymous with Syro-Palestinian) or eastern Mediterranean where in previous scholarship Canaanite was employed. The ancients themselves probably self-identified based on their nearest administrative centre, i.e. people in and in the vicinity of Sidon called themselves Sidonians, Hazor as Hazorites, etc., the need for larger ethnic and geopolitical designations coming from the administrative demands of empires.

¹²⁶ The term Amorite is somewhat ambiguous. The Semitic Akkadians used the term “Amurru”, with the meaning of ‘West’, of the entire Levantine coast in the MBA. The Amorites were thus the peoples west of the Akkadians, and seem to have included both settled urban peoples as well as groups of nomadic pastoralists. Like the term Canaanite, Amorite was not the self-designation of a people, but rather used by those outside the group. During the period of the so-called Amorite Kingdoms, the main cities under Amorite aegis included Yamhad, Qatna, Mari, Ebla, Assur, Isin, Larsa, and Babylon, and at the very least the dynastic lines of these cities were of Amorite extraction during the OB period. Redford 1992, 170; Weippert 1988, 210. On the “Amorite question”, see Edzard 1957; Buccellati 1966; Haldar 1971; Pardee & Glass 1984, 93; Whiting 1995, and more recently Streck 2000.

¹²⁷ “Peoples of the ANE were classified into groups based on the languages they spoke” (N.B.: spoke, not wrote – while the Mari texts are written in Akkadian, the Amorites of Mari were a NWS people). Jidejian 1992, 18. The terms East and West Semitic were initially coined as a means of differentiating Akkadian (and later Eblaite) from the rest of the Semitic language family based on certain linguistic criteria. The designation South Semitic (or the older South West Semitic), containing the Semitic languages of the African continent and the Arabian Peninsula, was later added to the West Semitic branch of the Semitic language family. Using this system of classification, the term NWS is used to refer to the Northern branch of the West Semitic languages, not to languages existing somewhere in the cardinal direction of Northwest from some imagined centre. See Huehnergard (2005) for discussion (he seems to favour the bipartite division, although he names the Western branch Central Semitic). The classification of the branches of the Semitic languages is not an uncontroversial issue, but however the languages are distributed, the NWS branch consists of a node of its own. See Pat-El & Wilson-Wright 2013, 398, for bibliography.

But not all authors use the terms in the sense of linguistic communities, which has added some confusion to the application of the terminology. Take for example Nielsen 1936, 6, who discussed differences in the South Semitic and North Semitic pantheons. It is obvious that this is a geographic rather than a linguistic division. But who are we to consider the North Semitic peoples? Where runs the dividing line? The ‘Northern’ branch of the West Semitic family in Nielsen’s division encompasses peoples ranging from Mari to the Levantine littoral, all south of the South Semitic Nineveh. Astral and natural deities, which his division is based on, were worshipped in nearly all of the cult centres. On the other hand, the Akkadians were not of the South Semitic branch, therefore seeming to be left out of Nielsen’s division. The fact that the city of Ugarit is in the cardinal direction of Northwest from the Mesopotamian heartland may also have added to the confusion of what is meant by the term NWS. It has been suggested that ‘Syro-Palestinian’ could be used instead of NWS as the terms are largely overlapping, but due

Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, etc. I mean to designate all the peoples living in the areas of these “empires” or power-bases, regardless of native language or ethnicity.¹²⁸ Ancient Israel refers to the areas of Judah and Israel from the LBA to the time of the Babylonian Exile, while northern Israel refers to the so-called Northern Kingdom of the Iron II period. The term Mesopotamian is used to refer to all inhabitants of the areas along the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The Levant is used to refer to the areas of coastal city-states, covering the area of modern day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and northern Iraq. Eastern Mediterranean comprises the Levant, the Aegean, Cyprus, and parts of Syria. The ANE designates the Levant, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Anatolia, or the so-called *Asia minor*.

My choice of how to use these designations is neither unproblematic nor uncontroversial, but I hope that by explicating my use of the terms I can at least add clarity to my discussion, within the scope of this thesis. A lengthy quotation from Michalowski is in order:

Traditionally, the study of this history has focused on a succession of “peoples”: Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Kassites, Arameans, and many others. The identification of these groups comes from a mixture of ancient labels and linguistic classification, so that historically divergent peoples are directly associated with specific languages or dialect groupings. This approach made sense decades ago, but after a half-century of cross-cultural studies on ethnicity and social identity, it is truly wanting. – Most current discussion of the “Amorite problem” distorts the issue by creating a unitary semantic concept that combines notions of common origin, ethnic and linguistic identity, tribalism, and nomadism as a way of life. As I see it, this way of essentialist thinking about terms such as MAR.TU leads to convenient historical fictions. We take all of the references to the word from all periods and throw them all in the same basket, implying that they all denote the same loosely defined notion of an Amorite people. – Seen in this manner, a master narrative emerges in which nomads or pastoralists move across Syria and Mesopotamia, from the desert to the sown, first raiding and harassing, then transgressing and finally dominating the urban areas of the Near East, from tent to city after city.¹²⁹

Michalowski’s “master narrative” is what I have called the ‘metanarrative’ in this dissertation, the tendentious modern prism through which we examine the ancient evidence.¹³⁰

to the existence of Indo-European and other linguistic communities in the Syro-Palestinian area, the terms are not interchangeable.

¹²⁸ This is a problematic approach, the creation of ‘convenient historical fictions’ to coin a phrase from Michalowski (2011), who discussed the difficult issues of ANE languages and ethnicities on pp. 81 ff.

¹²⁹ Michalowski 2011, 84–85.

¹³⁰ The term metanarrative was coined by J.-F. Lyotard in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [Minneapolis, MA (UP): 1984]. While the focus is on modern metanarratives, the Combat Myth itself might be interpreted as an ancient metanarrative in the sense I argue in this work that it functioned as a hegemonic narrative that was used to legitimate the existing social order. Inarguably the Combat Myth is a “grand narrative”, which was, according to him, the basis of legitimacy in the pre-modern era.

The metanarrative, while affect the study of Mariote and HB texts alike, is a special concern with the Ugaritic texts that are often fragmentary and may easily accommodate multiple readings. Or as Sasson succinctly put it: “Ugaritic narratives, for example, are not for the faint, and determining what they say is more of a scholarly convention than is admitted”.¹³¹ While my own examination is in no way unburdened by such metanarratives, I have at least attempted to remain conscious of my own biases in the reading and the discussion of the ancient texts (see Chapter 3 for discussion). It must be stressed that it is not my intention to recreate the scholarly works of the past century, but to build upon their findings on the use of the Combat Myth in the texts of the HB. Therefore it is prudent to briefly review what has been written on the topic, which is the purpose of the following sections of the thesis.

2. Historical Survey of Research

2.1 North West Semitic Combat Myth

There are three major sections in this survey of previous research, which cover the Combat Myth (section 2.1), ancient NWS kingship (section 2.2), and Hebrew poetry (section 2.3). The following chapter contains the history of research of the Ugaritic Combat Myth, i.e. the ways in which the myth was (and occasionally still is) interpreted in the research literature prior to the suggestion that the central feature of the myth contains a political aspect. The interpretation of the myth is reviewed in sections, which include the seasonal myth, the cosmogonic myth, and the political myth. There is some overlap between the categories, as they have often been discussed in conjunction with one another, but nonetheless I find them a useful tool of differentiation in that they facilitate explanation of particular facets of the theories used to interpret the myth. A further part of this review of the history of research is to show how Smith and Wyatt came to the conclusion that the myth was of a political nature.

¹³¹ Sasson 2005, 217.

2.1.1 The Seasonal Myth

2.1.1.1 Vegetation and the Agroclimatic Year

The seasonal or calendrical interpretation of the Baal Cycle was advanced most famously by Virolleaud, Dussaud, Hooke, Gaster, De Moor, Yon, and Margalit, although it could be claimed that the theoretical framework for the interpretation existed even prior to the discovery of the Ugaritic myths, harking back to Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890). Frazer saw sympathetic magic behind several ancient religious traditions. For example, he interpreted the practice of drowning by water (which took place e.g. in the Babylonian Tammuz celebrations), as a primitive magical rite meant to ascertain or induce the return of the rains. Drowning in the water was supposed to compel the god to let his floods wash the earth.¹³² The theory of the “nature myth” – interpreting myths by how they serve to explain natural phenomena – is largely based on the writings of F. M. Müller, especially his *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*.¹³³

Gaster suggested that the poem of this ancient Semitic nature-myth described the battle between Baal as the god of the rains against “the gods of the sea and the rivers”, which ends in the defeat and capture of the latter. This is the mythological explanation of the phenomenon of the breaking of the drought in late September by both the rain of heaven and the rivers and wadis coursing down from the hills (which, he fails to note, draw their water from the same source during the rainy season). He suggested that these alternative sources of water may “quite naturally” be regarded as striving against one another, although why the two types of sweet water should consider each other adversarial is not entirely clear. In mythological terms, this is understood as a battle between “the genius of the rain and the spirits of sea and river” for the domination of the earth during the rainy season.¹³⁴ Jacobsen likewise saw the myth as exemplifying a mythicization of the battle between the thunderstorm and the sea, concluding from this that the origin of the myth was in the Eastern Mediterranean.¹³⁵

Gaster viewed the myth as an annual revival of vegetation personified in the god that died and returned from the dead. Baal's foes, “His Highness of the Sea” and “the Suffete of the River” were, according to him, self-explanatory and

¹³² Frazer 1890, 194–195.

¹³³ Müller 1897.

¹³⁴ Gaster 1939, 21–22.

¹³⁵ Jacobsen 1968, 107.

called for no further comment.¹³⁶ In a classic reference to the annual cycle, he suggested that the battle between Baal and his foes represented the “annual combats and tugs-o’-wars between Summer and Winter which are enacted as part of the harvest ceremonies all over the world”.¹³⁷ Gaster viewed the myths as interchangeable in their substance, with only superficial variation. The interpretation of the myth was obviously still in its infancy, but the cohesive approach to ANE myths is certainly not without merit. Gaster must also be commended for making the connection between Baal and Adad, based on the Assyrian text CT xxv. 17, 32.

Among the first to remark on the Baal Cycle specifically was J. Montgomery, who described the myth as the rebellion of ‘the waters’ personified in the sea and the rivers, whom he called Abode-of-the-Sea and Judge-of-the-River. He also connected the adversarial river of the myth with the river of Eden,¹³⁸ apparently linking it with the concept of a world-encircling stream. In mythological thinking, rivers have indeed been widely connected with the symbols of the serpent and the dragon,¹³⁹ the topic of which I will discuss subsequently. W. F. Albright was also among the early scholars to interpret Baal as a god of fertility whose job was to send rain down on the earth.¹⁴⁰

According to Petersen & Woodward, it is possible to categorize nature myths into three separate categories: solar, lunar, and meteorological,¹⁴¹ although a common astral category may be suggested for the first two. Of these, the interpretation of the Baal Cycle has always belonged to the meteorological category. Writing in 1939, not long after the discovery of the tablets from Ras Shamra, Gaster suggested that the Baal Cycle presents a narrative of the battle between the rain and the sea. According to him, “The interpretation of this text is really very simple. It mythologizes the natural rivalry between rain on the one hand and sea and river on the other as sources of irrigation at the end of the dry season”.¹⁴² He also held that the text mythologized a natural event occurring at the

¹³⁶ Gaster 1939, 22. Note the etymology of the word ‘suffete’, from the Latin *suffes*, a borrowing of a phrase referring to the Carthaginian magistrates and therefore etymologically related to the Semitic stem. Albright (1936, 19) argued that the term “belongs, however, to a very advanced stage of evolution of the Phoenician magistracy, and it is questionable whether it can safely be used in so early a period as the one in which our texts were composed”.

¹³⁷ Gaster 1939, 23.

¹³⁸ Montgomery 1935, 269–270.

¹³⁹ Van Henten 1999, 267.

¹⁴⁰ Albright 1932, 191.

¹⁴¹ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234.

¹⁴² Gaster 1939, 21.

beginning of autumn.¹⁴³ Not to mention that the saline water of the sea is seldom used for irrigation,¹⁴⁴ the simplicity of the ‘natural’ rivalry between rain and the sea seems quite confounding.

In ancient NWS cosmogony, rain was often thought to issue from the ‘supercaelian sea’, the sea above the skies, but this body of water does not engage in battle with the earthly sea in any known ANE myth. Tiamat and Apsu (ZU.AB) of *EE* have sometimes been interpreted as representing feminine salt-water and masculine sweet water, an interpretation which the ancient Sumerians may not have made at all,¹⁴⁵ as the saltwater sea was of little consequence to the cosmology of the Sumerians.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, it is not Apsu and Tiamat that engage in battle in *EE*; it is Tiamat and Marduk, with the help of his arsenal of storm winds. It bears remarking that it is the Sumerian term A.AB.BA (also AB and AB.BA), on occasion syllabically rendered as *a-ia-a-ba* or *a-ia-a-ma* (rather than the Akkadian *tāmtum*, from which Tiamat seems to have been derived), which is associated with Yamm in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁴⁷ Pope also suggested that the Sumerian words A.AB.BA, ZU.AB, and ENGUR were more or less synonymous, but of these A.AB.BA was conceived of as a geographic body of water.¹⁴⁸ It should be noted that there is nothing in the early Amorite witnesses to the myth which suggest that the sea was seen as a particularly feminine character, or that it had an anthropomorphic character at all. The anthropomorphic

¹⁴³ Gaster 1939, 23.

¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Gaster seems to imply that the sea represents fertility in the sense that the “inrushing sea” is beset with squalls in the autumn. Gaster 1939, 21.

¹⁴⁵ McCarter posited this in certain texts of the HB, among them Pss. 69 and 18. He also claims that in “contrast to the Mesopotamian situation, the distinction between the salt and sweet waters was not important in North West Semitic cosmologies”, and hence even sea and river could comprise a poetic pair. McCarter 1973, 404–406. Of course, sea and river do form a poetic pair even in Sumerian poetry.

¹⁴⁶ Edzard 1993, 2. In fact, according to Westenholz 2010, 293, a theology concerning “watery chaos” – not the sea – at the beginning of time was known only from Eridu, prior to the *EE*.

¹⁴⁷ Malamat 1998, 27, 29. See Horowitz 1998, 301ff. for a comprehensive discussion on the names of the sea in Sumerian and Akkadian. The association of the Ugaritic *ym* with the Akkadian *tāmtum* has recently been argued against by Tugendhaft 2010; according to him (pp. 699–700), the proposed equivalence has been used to make unsupported correspondences between the *EE* and the Baal Cycle. While this is true on the part of some commentators (he quotes Durand 1993, 42), it is also true that the Ugaritic *ym*, the Akkadian *tāmtum* and the Sumerian A.AB.BA (which in Akkadian texts could be read as *tāmtum* or *ayyaba*) can all be used to signify the Mediterranean Sea specifically, which seems to have been the element intended in the Amorite myth which was adapted both by the Ugaritians and the Babylonians.

¹⁴⁸ Pope 1955, 60. Tugendhaft (2010, 701) writes that the divinized and personified sea was conceived of as a female character in “Mesopotamian myth”, but there is very little in the Sumerian texts that could be used to determine the gender of the personified sea, a question that would have seemed non-sensical to the Sumerians. In the text BM 74329, the sea, A.AB.BA, is called ‘mother’; however, because the text is written in Akkadian using a few Sumerograms, the gendering of the sea in the text is likely due to Akkadian influence.

representation of the sea was a later development in the mythical tradition, according to the textual witnesses.

Ginsberg was another early proponent of the nature myth interpretation. He saw the character of Baal as representing dry land and Yamm as his “antithesis”, suggesting that the nature of the Storm-God’s opponent “is obvious from his name”. According to him, the antagonism between the two natural forces is apparent.¹⁴⁹ Langdon believed that the idea of the dying god was connected with the element of fresh water, and that this type of god was developed by peoples settling in lands which were dependent upon irrigation. Baal has been interpreted as one of the dying and rising gods from early on – a theory which at least in central European scholarship had its roots in the search for the origins of or parallels for Christian concepts.¹⁵⁰ According to Leick, the majority of myths featuring the concept of the dying god were “anchored in seasonal rituals”, being of great importance to ancient agricultural communities.¹⁵¹ Langdon also saw the dying god as having been intimately connected with the “pantheon of the ocean”.¹⁵² For example, Langdon claimed that in the ceremony of the “wailings of Tammuz”, a wooden effigy of the god was cast into the waves¹⁵³ just as Osiris was cast into the sea in Egypt, where it would pass into the underworld.¹⁵⁴

According to Petersen & Woodward, it cannot be denied that on a surface level, some myths, such as the Yamm-narrative, deal with man’s relationship with various natural phenomena.¹⁵⁵ This seems somewhat speculative, considering that the only thing connecting the Ugaritic Yamm to the sea in the Baal Cycle is the character’s name. Were we to change the name to any other, the character of Yamm would be disconnected from any association with natural phenomena, as there is nothing in the narrative itself to suggest that, even on a surface level, it concerns man’s relationship with the sea. The physical aspect of the sea does not

¹⁴⁹ Ginsberg 1935, 328.

¹⁵⁰ See e.g. von Soden 1955, who studied the faith of the Babylonians in terms of Marduk’s “resurrection” (*Wiederauferstehung*).

¹⁵¹ Leick 1991, 36. Even though writing in the 1990s, she still seemed to view the concept through the lens of Christianity: “Although an eschatological dimension of salvation through the dying god does not seem to form a prominent part of the myth, its message is reassuring: it makes sense of the annual or sabbatical fluctuation in fertility, the change of the seasons and confirms the beliefs in the ultimate cosmic balance”.

¹⁵² Langdon 1914, 8. Also Langdon (1923, 36–64), where he discussed the death and resurrection of Bel-Marduk and connects this with the passion of Christ.

¹⁵³ The Tammuz-hymn BM 23 658:23 reads *ÍD-DA ÍD-DA É-SIG-GI-DA*, “to the river, to the river, to him that was cast out”.

¹⁵⁴ Langdon 1914, 11–12.

¹⁵⁵ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234.

feature in the myth, even in allegory. What we are dealing with is a mythological entity which may or may not have been associated with the physical sea in the minds of the myth's recipients.¹⁵⁶

For all that I may disagree with the minutiae of their study, Petersen & Woodward articulated an important point:

Despite the rejection of the nature myth model by most students of mythology, this theory has remained remarkably powerful. The theory still enjoys great currency in the work of scholars who study ANE myth and religion...¹⁵⁷

Petersen & Woodward also attribute the popularity of these functionalist theories of myth, which they consider “essentially tautological”, to their “common-sense simplicity”. While I do agree with their position on functionalist theories when it comes to the nature-myth (i.e. where “Baal becomes storm, Yamm becomes sea, conflict between the two becomes a storm over the sea”), I do not think that the theories of social organization are quite so guilty of reductionism or “gross simplification of the mythic data”.¹⁵⁸ It is important not to confuse functionalist theories of the Myth & Ritual School with the interrogation of a myth's function in a given society. While the natural interpretation of the Baal Cycle has received some criticism over the years, it is still surprisingly popular among scholars of Ugaritic religion.¹⁵⁹ The argumentation seems to be that because Baal is categorized as a weather-god, Baal narratives *must* be allegories of the weather, and changes in the weather during the agroclimatic year. This annual cycle of the weather has also received a ritualistic explanation, which I discuss in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Wakeman (1973, 104) has argued that the authors of the myths might not even have been able to differentiate between the symbolic understanding of the sea and the proper name Yamm. They would not have understood the sea as a monstrous creature or the monstrous creature as the sea, but the association of one to the other would have been immediate and visceral. I am unsure whether this would indeed have been the case with the inland Amorites.

¹⁵⁷ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234.

¹⁵⁸ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 234–235.

¹⁵⁹ It is not unheard of in the interpretation of the Biblical Combat Myth, either. See Edelman 2012, 161, “A similar mythic complex is reflected in the battle between Horus and Seth in Egyptian tradition. While this mythic complex might have been introduced into Egypt under the Semitic Hyksos kings in the Middle Bronze period (ca. 1674–1567 BCE), there are aspects of the myth that reflect the yearly growing cycle, so its format might be cross-cultural”. While it is likely that the *Contendings of Horus and Seth* bears NWS influence, neither the Ugaritic nor the remnants of the Biblical myth of combat have any explicit connection to the agroclimatic year.

2.1.1.2 The Ritual Expression of the Annual Cycle

Proponents of the so-called ‘Myth & Ritual School’ of the early 20th century advocated a view which saw the Baal Cycle as a narrative about the changing of the seasons, expressed in various calendrical rites throughout the solar year. This view is somewhat related to the concept of the dying and rising vegetation-god, discussed most prominently by Hooke.¹⁶⁰ Gaster, for example, believed that the conflict myth was a symbolic battle in which the past year was defeated by the heralding of the new year. The association of the Baal Cycle with the ritual expression of the annual cycle probably finds its origin in the association of the Ugaritic myth with the Babylonian *EE*, which indeed seems to have been used as part of the celebrations of the New Year in the Akītu festival.¹⁶¹

The Baal Cycle has been connected to an autumnal New Year’s celebration in Ugarit e.g. by Loretz and De Langhe.¹⁶² The ritual interpretation of the Baal Cycle was also favoured by De Moor.¹⁶³ Nordic Psalm research, pioneered by Mowinckel, traditionally also saw certain Psalms as a part of the Palestinian New Year’s festival and a cultic drama contained therein. In this festival, Yahweh’s kingship over the forces of Chaos was annually confirmed,¹⁶⁴ a concept which may have informed such interpretations of the Baal Cycle. It has even been suggested that prisoners of war symbolizing the Storm-God’s adversary may have been executed during this ritual performance, although there is no actual evidence of this.¹⁶⁵

Mowinckel was one of the first authors to posit that a cultic ritual of the New Year, taking place in the autumn rather than the spring (as it did in Babylon), would have coincided with a festival celebrating the enthronement of the king in ancient Israelite society. According to him, the monarch was proclaimed king over

¹⁶⁰ Hooke 1933.

¹⁶¹ For research history of the Akītu festival, see Bidmead 2004, 17ff; Pongratz-Leisten 1994. In particular, Bidmead has examined the festival with regard to the legitimation of kingship in the Mesopotamian context, although she dedicates relatively few pages (pp. 66–70) to the use of the myth of *EE* in this framework. The connection between the myth and the festival is no longer universally accepted, and it was already questioned, e.g. by von Soden 1955.

¹⁶² Loretz 1990, 75; De Langhe 1958, 133, 139.

¹⁶³ De Moor 1971.

¹⁶⁴ Mowinckel 2004^[1962], 106–192; 1950, 71; Weiser 1959; Jeremias 1965; Anderson 1972, 232; Eaton 1976; Gottlieb 1980, 62, and others. Mowinckel was not the first to suggest the connection between the Psalms and the New Year’s festival, following P. Volk’s *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes: (Laubhüttenfest)* [Tübingen: 1912].

¹⁶⁵ See Van Henten 1999, 265, according to whom the king would have taken on the role of the divinity and executed prisoners of war or rebels in place of the mythic dragon.

the cosmos in this ritual, having defeated the powers of chaos and thus renewed world order. He traced the roots of this festival to the pre-monarchic era, with it being one of the three festivals that the Israelites adopted from the ‘Canaanite’ population of the area, connecting it with a harvest festival in which the deity itself was enthroned, ensuring fertility and the renewal of the world. He located the *Sitz im Leben* of the Enthronement psalms in this context especially.¹⁶⁶

While there may be merit to his propositions, especially with regard to the cultic use of poetry in the Pre- and Early Monarchic periods, any attempt to extract the details of such festivals takes us into the realm of the fantastical. We must also question whether such a distinction can even be made, as there certainly would have been princes and petty rulers in the area of Palestine from the dawn of urbanization in the area, and there does not seem to be enough evidence to suggest that the later Israelite monarchy of the so-called era of the ‘United Monarchy’ would have essentially or fundamentally differed from these earlier forms of government, if not in increasing centralization and scope. Mowinckel may be correct, but our understanding of the character and meaning of such festivities – let alone specific rituals involved in them – must remain speculative.

The ritual expression of the annual cycle also ties in with the interpretation of Baal as a “dying the and rising god”. Gottlieb, for example, saw the Baal Cycle as representing the death and resurrection of a fertility-god, which preceded the enthronement of Baal as king of the gods.¹⁶⁷ While the context of the discourse has moved on from the ritual interpretation of the myth, the dialectic of life and death is still found in recent studies. Nissinen, for example, described Yam’s chaotic and destructive aspect as competing with Baal’s life-giving aspect.¹⁶⁸

While the natural and ritual interpretations of the Baal Cycle are still supported by some scholars, for the most part the views of this and the previous chapter have largely been supplanted by the thematic of chaos and order (discussed in the following chapters), although the view does still crop up now and again. However, in the words of N. Wyatt in response to the views presented here, “it is an indefensible and simplistic reductionism to shoehorn a whole religious system into an allegory of the seasons”.¹⁶⁹ Regardless of whether the myth was connected to the annual cycle and celebrated in ritual at any point in

¹⁶⁶ Mowinckel 2004, 130ff.

¹⁶⁷ Gottlieb 1980.

¹⁶⁸ Nissinen 2014, 42.

¹⁶⁹ Wyatt 2005b, 697.

history, the apparent function of the myth was quite different.

2.1.2 The Cosmogonic Myth

2.1.2.1 Cosmogony and the Battle of Creation

The battle between Yamm and Baal has been connected with the idea of a creation myth, following Gunkel, who perceived parallels to the narrative in the Babylonian creation epic *EE*. While Gunkel was not the first to entertain a connection between *EE* and Gen. 1, his treatment of the material was in many ways ground-breaking. He interpreted the materials through the prism of god's battle with a Chaos Dragon, and this interpretation has influenced subsequent treatments of the materials. There were two things in the Biblical material that puzzled Gunkel – the connection of what he saw as an originally Babylonian myth with Egypt, and what he saw as the eschatologization of the material already in the HB.¹⁷⁰ Both of these are probably the result of the Exile and the end of the Jerusalem monarchy, which on the one hand caused politically volatile material to be projected into a geographically and symbolically more neutral territory, and on the other caused a natural eschatologization of the idea of kingship – and with it, the eschatologization of the myths and symbols of kingship, the Combat Myth among them.¹⁷¹ Cross was one of the most influential Biblical scholars to interpret the myth as a cosmogonic myth.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ The way in which Gunkel (2006^[1895], 60) resolved the Egyptian problem was to suggest that the Biblical myth was not of purely Babylonian origin, but that an Egyptian myth had been added to it. Considering the influence of the NWS mythology on Egyptian myths of combat, this is rather an astute observation given that the NWS texts were yet to be discovered. The passages in the Book of Daniel have been seen as classic examples of the eschatologization of the motif. Dan. 7:2–3 reads, “I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another”. This passage is discussed at length by Day 1985, who saw the NWS Combat Myth rather than the Babylonian myth behind the verses. However, it seems likely that the hybrid Babylonian myth underlies the passages, due to the age of the text as well as the specific mention of the four winds stirring up the sea, which is a feature of *Enuma eliš* and cannot be found in the Ugaritic materials. Day also saw the god Baal behind the figure of the angel Michael in Daniel, which seems unlikely if direct influence is intended. The figure of Baal might be seen as a forerunner of the role of Michael in a fashion similar to how St. George fills a similar role in later European retellings of the myth of combat.

¹⁷¹ Edelman (2009, 82) discussed the embedding of the new conceptualizations of Yahweh during the Exile into the distant past “as though they had always been there” as a way of asserting continuity with the past. She does not use the term “ideological programme”, but that is the essence the process which she describes: the new concepts brought on by the new political situation of the Exile were projected (or ‘retrojected’) into the past of the community.

¹⁷² See the collected essays in Cross 2000, esp. 78–80.

Writing on the rhetorical strategies used in the construction of the narratives of the Tanach, Edelman states:

It is not that evidence is lacking; rather, it is that many scholars are uncomfortable with the cause-and-effect interpretative framework in which I have set the evidence, because it goes against the grain of a number of “clear statements” in the texts themselves. Thus, the disagreement is not over the evidence so much as what it provides evidence of. Many readers are assuming the scriptures are straightforward reports of things as they were before and at the time of writing while I am assuming they are rhetorical constructions designed to persuade hearers and readers about how things ought to be and should have been, which might include some reliable information about how things were before and at the time of writing, but incidentally, not as the primary focus.¹⁷³

Understanding the difference between what texts *say* and what they *communicate* is of vital importance. But what remains is that it was through the lens of Gunkel’s reading of the Biblical and Mesopotamian texts that the Ugaritic Baal Cycle was subsequently interpreted. The Ugaritic myth was connected to *EE*, e.g. by Widengren, Ringgren, and Mowinckel, the latter of whom suggested that the Northern Mesopotamian and Canaanite narratives offered a connecting link between the Babylonian and Biblical narratives; this is a view is still widely held.¹⁷⁴

Another of Gunkel’s discoveries deserves consideration: while he refused to believe that any human society could do without a creation narrative, he was puzzled as to why the concept of creation seems to have been a relatively late addition to the Biblical texts, especially those referencing the Combat Myth, which to him represented a creation battle. While man’s search for origins may well be metacultural,¹⁷⁵ no native NWS creation story is known prior to the influence of the hybrid Babylonian myth on the mythological conceptions of the wider ANE. Many scholars have assumed that in spite of the silence of the evidence, such a story must nonetheless have existed.¹⁷⁶ An alternative hypothesis is suggested in that the Amorites, according to the traditions of many militaristic societies, may have tended to historicize (rather than mythologize) their origin stories.¹⁷⁷ Like ancient Rome, such societies opt for political, historical narratives

¹⁷³ Edelman 2009, 84.

¹⁷⁴ Widengren 1958, 170; Ringgren 1990, 93; Mowinckel 2004, 145.

¹⁷⁵ Intracultural, multicultural, cross-cultural, and metacultural are definitions used to describe the dissemination of ideas across cultures.

¹⁷⁶ E.g. Ben Zvi 2014, 23: “Creation stories in which ‘water’ is identified with chaos and thus has to be defeated by the ordering deity so as to create order are well attested in the ANE”. Yet the example of this type of story which he offers is Gen 1:1–2:3.

¹⁷⁷ In fact, Sasson (2008, 494) submits that it was rare in the ancient world to begin histories from creation. Most ancient histories harked back to the founding of cities, or in the case of Mesopotamia, to the moment that the gods gifted kingship to human kind as the organizing principle of their political affairs.

of national origins instead of mythological cosmogonies.¹⁷⁸ And such narratives are known to us from the ancient North West Semites, e.g. in the Davidic and Exodus -narratives in the HB.¹⁷⁹

A cosmogonic interpretation of the myth has also been supported by Fisher, Wakeman, and Clifford. Loewenstamm saw the Biblical myths as having the same character of cosmogonic battle; according to him, this battle was periodically renewed in the world of the created order.¹⁸⁰ Montgomery was among the first to connect the narrative of the Baal Cycle to the first tablet of *EE* in 1935. Unlike many later authors, however, he did acknowledge that the Ugaritic myth is somewhat independent of both the Babylonian and the suggested Biblical parallels (e.g. Gen. 6 and “the rebellious Sons of God”).¹⁸¹ Albright was likewise among the early scholars to associate the Ugaritic myth with the Babylonian one, writing:

Yammu plays essentially the same rôle in Canaanite cosmogony that Tiāmat and Labbu, etc., do in Mesopotamian, and that the dragon Illuyankas does in Hittite. In Canaanite cosmogony we have the parallel monster Lôtân, Heb. Liwyātân, while in Hebrew cosmogony Tehôm and Râhab figure in a similar way.¹⁸²

These were very important notions at the time, and they must be given due respect. Albright was certainly not wrong in describing the early work on the Ugaritic texts as “epoch-making”.¹⁸³ Another one of Albright’s important contributions to the scholarly discourse on the comparative studies between the Ugaritic and Biblical texts can be found in the following quote:

Even if the direct connection [...] between the Ugarit texts and Biblical tradition should prove to be non-existent, as the writer believes, their indirect value for Biblical interpretation is certain to be very great indeed. Ultimately, indeed, their bearing on Biblical literary problems is likely to be far greater than that of the entire body of Mesopotamian and Anatolian cuneiform inscriptions.¹⁸⁴

While the worth of the Ugaritic texts rests not solely on their bearing on the

¹⁷⁸ See the classic work of G. Dumézil, *Mythes romains* (Revue de Paris 58: 1951), 105–118. Most of the later Roman cosmogonic stories were of Hellenistic origin, which was already remarked upon by the ancients. Also Kloos 1986, 190, “The divine mythology was transformed into national history by the Romans, because a concern for their own past prevailed upon their interests in purely superhuman matters. That is exactly the process which I assume to have taken place in Israel in the case of the Reed Sea story”.

¹⁷⁹ The formative national myths in the Bible have been examined by I. Paredes: *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (UCLA: UP, 2002). She discussed the Sargonic precedent of the Mosaic narrative briefly on pp. 18–21, but only as a parallel for the narrative.

¹⁸⁰ Loewenstamm 1992, 244–246.

¹⁸¹ Montgomery 1935, 270.

¹⁸² Albright 1936, 18.

¹⁸³ Albright 1934, 103. See the same for the very early research history on the Baal epic. Albright mentions the contributions of Virolleuad, Dussaud, Bauer, Baneth, Friedrich, Ginsberg, Montgomery, Barton, Dhorme, Eissfeldt, Gaster, Hrozný, and Cantineau; some of which have stood the test of time and others of which have found less use in subsequent scholarship.

¹⁸⁴ Albright 1934, 140.

Biblical texts, their importance cannot be overstated.

Another example of the presumed interconnectedness of all creation battle myth traditions is presented by Redford:

Although a strictly maritime setting does not inform the Egyptian stories [*viz.* the stories of the “southern Levantine littoral community”], the motif is clearly the same. We must remember, however, the very simple nature of the plot of these tales as well as the mutual awareness and interconnection through trade and travel enjoyed by communities around the Levantine and African coasts from time immemorial. We are, in fact, plummeted back to a prehistoric age if we seek to identify in time and place the point of origin of the story. It would be a bootless search. Even if one gifted narrator is responsible for turning the storm-lashing-the-coast into the hero-monster struggle, so many cult-centers in the interim have adopted, changed, embellished, and pruned this common heritage, often unconscious of their debt to a more remote author, that our quest would rapidly bog down into a form critical evaluation of varying versions. Suffice to say that Egypt and the Levant, in a way they scarcely realized, were joint heirs five millennia ago to a powerful and elemental creation narrative, which, in one form or another, is still with us today.¹⁸⁵

I disagree with Redford on several points. While there may be similarity to the motif, or *mythologeme*, these conflict stories from different cultural areas spanning several millennia are not interchangeable. Seeking to identify the point of origin of this particular myth, we are hardly plummeted back into the prehistoric age, as the development of the myth is well attested in literary sources. While the Ugaritic and Hebrew texts exist in the framework of the broad tradition of “conflict” myths, their “plot” is not the same, unless we strip the plot to such a skeletal state as to make it quite useless as a tool of comparison.¹⁸⁶ And the reductionist interpretation of “storm-lashing-the-coast” is not what the myth actually *signifies*, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis.

A cosmological understanding of the myth was also advanced by Petersen & Woodward, whose views I have already discussed in a previous chapter. They were among the first to offer this type of interpretation for the myth.¹⁸⁷ Their analytic understanding of the Baal-Yamm portion of the Baal Cycle consists of three basic parts 1) the time before Yamm challenges Baal, 2) Yamm’s challenge of Baal, and 3) the status of the cosmos after Baal has defeated Yamm. Petersen & Woodward used their relational model to present the structure of the cosmos prior to and after the conflict between the gods. While the intent behind their model is

¹⁸⁵ Redford 1992, 48.

¹⁸⁶ Certainly there have been literary-critical theories suggesting that all human narratives come down to seven basic plots or even to a “monomyth”, harking back to Aristotle’s *Poetics*. See D. Dutton, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* [New York: 2005]; J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* [Princeton: 1968]. Such oversimplifications of myth-telling hardly do individual narratives justice. Criticism against these types of theories has been levelled, e.g. by Northup 2006, 8. The question is on the extent to which we can simplify concepts before they lose their usefulness as tools of category.

¹⁸⁷ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 241–242.

to avoid reductionist interpretations of myths,¹⁸⁸ that is exactly what their model seems to accomplish. The relationship between El and Yamm, for instance, can hardly be reduced into a straightforward “El controls Yamm” graph.¹⁸⁹ Our understanding of their relationship in the myth is actually severely limited. There may be several variations of this relationship even in the texts of the Baal Cycle, and more than one type of relationship may have been understood as existing between them at the same time.¹⁹⁰

There is also the question of how ancient Ugaritians of different strata of society living in different times related to the version of the relationship of the divinities preserved in the six tablets that we call the Baal Cycle. It is unclear to me what it is about El’s character in the Baal Cycle, apart from his title as the ‘Father of the gods’, that specifically suggests his role as the maintainer of the macrocosm,¹⁹¹ or indeed how a category such as the “macrocosm” would have been understood by the ancient Ugaritians. The categories and relational structures proposed by Petersen & Woodward may be useful in gauging the deep structures of mythologies and making comparisons between the ‘bare bones’ of the myths of different textual traditions. The problem with this approach is that it does not engage with the text so much as with a specific reading of the text, an approximation of the contents of the narrative which are more or less accepted in popular consensus.

Petersen & Woodward explain the concept of macrocosm in their model as consisting of El’s mountain as “the typical ANE conception of a boundary which keeps out the primeval deep”,¹⁹² yet they fail to explain in what sense this

¹⁸⁸ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 237–239.

¹⁸⁹ Stoltz (1999, 739) saw El and Yamm as the opposite sides of the same coin; Yamm representing the chaotic aspect of the primal water and El the cosmic side of the same, paralleling the symbolism of the sweet and saline waters of Babylonian mythology. While this interpretation finds little textual support, what seems clear is that a complex relationship existed between the characters.

¹⁹⁰ While the motivation of Kloos (1986, 67) is in establishing a categorical difference between the narrative of the Baal Cycle and the Biblical forms of the myth, she brings up an important point in writing: “Now there have been scholars who have claimed a ‘cosmogonic’ character to Baal’s victory over Yam. They had good reason to do so: if the presence of the ‘creation through conflict’ idea is assumed in the OT, and if it is assumed at the same time that the motif of Yhwh’s battle with the Sea was taken over by the Israelites from their Canaanite neighbours, one has to put up with a discrepancy (Baal’s fight not being connected with creation) [...] to call Baal’s battle ‘cosmogonic’ is a device born out of necessity; it does not have, to my mind, much to be said for it”. The myth of the Baal Cycle is not a cosmogonic myth. Of course, the myths of the HB are also cosmogonic only secondarily.

¹⁹¹ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 238. The interpretation of El as Yamm’s father is also highly uncertain, based mostly on Yamm’s position as one of Asherat’s brood, and on the fragmentary text KTU 1.1 IV, which has been notoriously difficult to interpret.

¹⁹² Petersen & Woodward 1977, 238. For Kramer (1944, 39), mountain was the combination of

conception would have been typical for ANE thought. The same concept is elaborated by Berge:

So, out of the splitting of the Sea, Israel is given social visibility. As a result, water used for the Israelite genocide (Exodus 1–2) by Pharaoh, and water as the center of chaos, death, and impurity, is now changed into a symbol of divine power and cosmic and divine law, which is the basis for Israelite monarchy. This sets the limit for the monster. Thus, the new life of Israel is one of an ordered universe, which also includes the morality.¹⁹³

While the interpretation may well be correct, imposing such categories onto ancient thought and reading them into ancient texts is highly problematic, all the more so because these are often done without a critical review of the evidence. Their model would be improved with a more careful reading of the texts and a more careful definition of terms, especially relational predicates. The question to ask then is – at what point does the model become too complex to be of real use? It would seem that there is a limited return to be had from reducing mythology into formal logical systems, and even this is only to follow a thorough examination of mythological and narrative concepts.¹⁹⁴

The battle of creation and the battle against chaos are intertwined, and indeed the thematic of chaos and order appears to stem from the interpretation of the myth as a creation myth. Mettinger was one of the staunchest proponents of interpreting the myth as a Chaos battle, which for him was a battle of creation specifically. For Mettinger, this myth of creation battle was introduced to Israel's theophanic tradition through the pre-Israelite Jerusalem cult; thus, he insisted that the motif was not originally a cosmogonic motif in Israel.¹⁹⁵ It is true that the consolidation and expansion of the empire (i.e. battle) and engagement in construction and repair of buildings (i.e. creation), especially temples, were both symbolic acts required of Mesopotamian monarchs. And indeed, both motifs are featured in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions which I discuss subsequently. While a logical – or even chronological – sequence between battle-creation or expansion-building may be posited (victory in battle to consolidate the borders of the kingdom must usually, although not inevitably, precede temple building and restoration projects), it does not follow that one was necessarily dependent on the other, or that the two hallmarks of kingship could not exist independently.

A king could hardly engage in peaceful restoration projects if hostile

heaven and earth before their separation in Sumerian conception, born of the primeval deep with no violence.

¹⁹³ Berge 2014, 119.

¹⁹⁴ Kloos (1986, 124) expressed similar sentiments: "We must be careful not to try and force the beliefs of the Israelites during a great span of centuries into one logical system".

¹⁹⁵ Mettinger 1982, 70–71.

nations were *ad portas*, and the conquest of new territories offered fresh opportunities for the construction of ever more splendid temples for one's gods, but while creation is *facilitated* by battle, it is not the necessary *consequence* of battle. Nevertheless, victory in battle was paramount for ancient kingship, as it was evidence of divine favour. Success in battle was proof of divine blessing, and it was through success in military campaigns that rule was legitimized. And creation, it seems, was merely *contingent* on successes on the battlefield. A creation myth is an understandable addition, a natural later or subsequent development to the Combat Myth. But it was a secondary development, not an integral part of the core myth.¹⁹⁶ And it was the addition of the aspect of creation into the Combat Myth that introduced to it a dialectic of chaos and order.

2.1.2.2 Cosmos and Chaos

One of the most popular and persistent interpretations of the combat of Baal and Yamm has been that of a battle between the forces of chaos and order (i.e. the Storm-God's conquest as a metaphor for the formation of ordered society). Eissfeldt, one of the first modern commentators on the mythology, viewed the battle between Baal and the Sea on Mount Saphon as the battle between light and darkness,¹⁹⁷ which has undoubtedly affected the later readings of the myth. This tendency is still evident in much of the current literature on the topic, albeit Anglo-American research has of late been moving on from the interpretation (see primarily J. Scurlock & R. Beal (eds.), *Chaos and Cosmos: A Reconsideration of Herman Gunkel's Chaokampf Hypothesis*, 2013 and R. S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible*, 2005).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ As succinctly put by Tugendhaft (2013, 195), "The Ba'al Cycle is not a cosmogony".

¹⁹⁷ Eissfeldt 1932, 24.

¹⁹⁸ Tsumura 2005 contains similar conclusions. Wyatt wrote a response to Watson's book in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2 (2008), 338–340. Here, he defends his interpretation of the myth as a Chaos-myth which is, implicitly, connected to creation. But he also emphasizes the invariably political nature of the myth "where attested outside Israel", and that it is not unreasonable to discover such political elements in Pre-Exilic Biblical texts, "though obviously at times tempered and redirected in the Post-Exilic era".

I think that he is correct in his assessment of the political nature of the myth, but I would submit that the political aspects of the myth are also discernible in Post-Exilic texts, just as they are still distinguishable in texts from the Hellenistic era. Lost to us are the purported cultic and ritual aspects which may have accompanied the texts or their source texts (using the widest

One of the earliest proponents of the chaos-cosmos interpretation of the Baal Cycle was F. M. Cross in his *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*.¹⁹⁹ The dialogue or dialectic of cosmos and chaos as the interpretative strategy of the Combat Myth is still rather popular in research. Malamat described Yamm as the representative of “the cosmic force of raging waters, a personification most likely derived from the character of the Mediterranean Sea”.²⁰⁰ While the description seems plausible, we must account for the fact that “cosmos” is a thoroughly Hellenistic concept, and retrojecting it into LBA Ugarit seems somewhat misplaced. Ugarit may have traded with its Western (and Eastern) neighbours, but such abstract notions of divinity did not feature even in Hellenistic religion until a nearly a millennium later.²⁰¹ Sonik compared Chaos in the texts of Ovid and Hesiod (whose works she believes have most significantly contributed to modern thought on the concept) to *EE*, concluding that the idea of cosmogonic chaos does not feature in the latter.²⁰² The chaos-cosmos theory was also supported by Clifford.²⁰³

Owing much to the works of J. G. Frazer (1890) and M. Eliade (1949) in the field of Comparative Religion, the older paradigm for the interpretation of the cycle still seems to hold considerable sway among scholars. There has certainly been a tendency to interpret ancient myths through these grand theories, on the one hand, and to see all ancient myths as re-tellings of some *Ur*-myth, a basic myth rooted somewhere in the subconscious imagination of man, on the other. This can be seen for example in J. Montgomery’s description of Yamm and Baal’s struggle as picturing “in Homeric fashion the combat between the hero and his opponents”. He also described the myth as “highly developed poetic, perhaps choric, art”.²⁰⁴

definition of ‘text’ here) of the texts.

A response to the monograph was also written by Batto 2013, which I will discuss subsequently. In brief: Tsumura and Watson hold that no Chaos-battle can be found in the HB, while Wyatt and Batto hold that it can indeed be found. My position is that no Chaos-battle can be found in the HB, but a myth(s) of divine combat is present, as Chaos is not an essential component of the battle myth tradition (which is a position held by all four scholars). Wyatt and Batto’s assessment of Watson’s thesis as tendentious (on p. 219, Batto goes so far as to call it “prejudicial”) seems correct, but she still – perhaps inadvertently – manages to make a valid point about whether chaos needs to be seen as an *essential* characteristic of the myth.

¹⁹⁹ Cross 1973, 120.

²⁰⁰ Malamat 1998, 28.

²⁰¹ Hesiod’s *Theogony* is dated to c. 700 BCE.

²⁰² Sonik 2013.

²⁰³ Clifford 1984, 184–198.

²⁰⁴ Montgomery 1935, 268.

The problem with these overarching interpretations²⁰⁵ is that many of the scholars did not engage with the original source texts, but with translations or recapitulations of the myths, which may have resulted in a much more cohesive and linear view of the mythology and the mythic narratives than strictly warranted. When all of the available evidence seems to fit too neatly into a theory, it may not be the mark of an impervious theory, but a theory in need of reassessment. While some Greek mythical narratives likely have their precedents in the Bronze Age, and Ugarit as a sea-faring city appears to have had contact with the proto-Hellenic Aegean culture, to describe the myth as Homeric is to strip it of all its uniquely NWS characteristics.

This theory is also problematic for its many unspoken assumptions, perhaps the greatest among them the fact that the terms “chaos” and “cosmos” are seldom defined in any fashion approaching clarity.²⁰⁶ One such unspoken assumption is that there is something inherently chaotic about water and the sea as the container of water, discussed for example by Levin:

The Bible's double beginning shows that the experience of water is ambivalent from the very outset. On the one hand, enough available and controllable water for the lives of human beings and beasts is the precondition for an ordered world. The cosmos is characterized by a secure provision of water. On the other hand, water can become an extremely threatening enemy. Water is also the epitome of chaos.²⁰⁷

Seldom are attempts made to define chaos itself. In terms of the application of such terms, there is a significant difference between scholars of the early 20th century and the 21st century, let alone between a modern academic and a Bronze Age scribe. And what do we mean by cosmos? Dictionaries render the word,

²⁰⁵ See Niditch 1985, 107–108: “The themes of ideal cosmos and emergence into reality point to a paradox within each of us and within human culture. We perceive the desirability of an eternal cosmogonic ideal which emphasizes unity, harmony, and equality. At the same time we require definition, order, differentiation to make bearable our smallness in the face of the world's enormity, to air in the survival process of self-definition, to keep at bay the first theme found in Gen. 1–11, chaos; for chaos always threatens even once the initial ideal ordering of the cosmos has been completed. Chaos threatens in the form of uncontrollable natural forces, in uncontrollable human decisions which affect our lives, and most important in the uncontrollable sides of our selves”. One cannot help but observe the influences of Existentialist philosophy in such musings.

²⁰⁶ Sonik 2013 is an exception to the rule, defining cosmos as “an organized universe”, and offering two different definitions of chaos: kratogenic (the confusion which exists within the organized universe and which threatens civilized society, cosmic) and cosmogonic (primal disorder, precosmic); these definitions are based on the pioneering work of J. Assman. While it is not certain that either term would have been meaningful in the NWS context, at least there is a possibility of finding the subtext of kratogenic chaos in the NWS texts.

²⁰⁷ Levin 2014, 1. Also Nissinen 2014, 29: “Water is the absolute precondition for the existence of everything that grows, breaths [sic], and moves. Every living creature is dependent on water, not only to sustain living organisms, but also for other important functions, such as cleaning and transportation. At the same time, water - not just the lack of water but water itself - may also bring about death, since all breathing creatures may drown in it, and flooding water may destroy the same life it has upheld and (re)generated.”

derived from the Greek *κοσμος* and probably originally having to do with the ordering of military troops, as meaning the world or the universe, regarded as an orderly and harmonious system. Was this concept, which seems to have originated with Pythagoras, the experience of the world of the ancient North West Semite, who must have regarded both the world and the universe with very different eyes from the modern man?²⁰⁸

And what of chaos, a term for which there exists no exact translation in Bronze Age Semitic languages? The Greek *χαος*, usually taken to mean disorder or confusion of some kind, originally signified a gaping hole, derived from the verb for yawning and thence the yawning of the earth.²⁰⁹ The cosmogonic use of the word seems to have originated with Hesiod in the 8th century BCE (during which time it was still understood as a gap out of which all things arose),²¹⁰ so once more it is important to ask the question of whether the ancient NWS mythographers had a concept for chaos – and if they did, how exactly they would have conceived of it.²¹¹ By suggesting that the concept of Chaos was not endogenic to ancient NWS thought I do not mean to indicate a frankly Orientalist rational/irrational divide between the NWS and Hellenistic cultures.²¹²

The concept of chaos seems to have been rather concrete in the earliest Hellenistic witnesses, and the measure of abstraction is not synonymous with rationality. What I am questioning is the meaningfulness of the category for ancient NWS thought when the category is absent from ancient NWS literary works. The word *תהו* is often offered as an indigenous Hebrew term for chaos, but its interpretation has doubtless been influenced by its prominent use in what has widely been read as a Chaos myth.²¹³ While we must take care in imposing our views on ancient thought, absence of evidence in this case suggests that the

²⁰⁸ Wyatt (1996, 375) discussed the difference between ancient and modern thought in that the ancient man had not yet developed the conceptual tools for the kind of analysis we frequently engage in. His concern is with categories used by the authors of the Biblical texts, but it seems applicable with regard to this particular dialectic with ancient Semitic peoples in general.

²⁰⁹ West 1997, 228.

²¹⁰ Sonik 2013, 6. See her footnote 13 for sources on the study of the Hellenistic concept of chaos. Hesiod's *Theogony* was also examined in connection with the myth by Campbell 2013.

²¹¹ Hesiod's work contains influence of broadly Mesopotamian and possibly Amorite conceptions as transmitted through the Hittite-Hurrian cultural sphere, which Hellenistic studies have accepted only in recent years. See M. West's classic work, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry* (1997).

²¹² Discussed, e.g. by Scurlock 2013a, 49.

²¹³ Tsumura (2005, 196), following a linguistic investigation of the term comes to the conclusion that it "has nothing to do with the idea of a chaotic state of the earth" but refers simply to desolate and empty land.

concept is exogenic regarding the ancient Semitic worldview.²¹⁴

Chaos and cosmos seem to have been juxtaposed for the first time by the 1st-century Roman poet Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, and his description (1.9–10) of Chaos as “a shapeless and unwrought mass” (*rudis indigestaque moles*) seems to have had a lasting impact on how the concept is perceived. While the word itself is not used, the concepts seem already to have been apposed by ancient Egyptians in the concepts of *ma’at* and *isfet*. And if indeed it can be argued that the concepts for chaos and cosmos could be found in ancient NWS thought, we must also weigh the influence of these quintessentially Egyptian concepts on them. Was the dichotomy significant in other Bronze Age NWS societies? Batto pointed out – and disagreed with – the notion that the interjection of the Greek concepts of chaos and cosmos has been one of the chief criticisms the *Chaoskampf* theory.²¹⁵ My own intention is not to volley criticism against the Combat Myth as such, but against the elements exogenic to the NWS myth in our discourse.

Dichotomies in general seem to have held less sway for the North West Semites than they did for ancient Egyptians or Sumerians, whose influence we can trace on the East Semitic traditions of the Combat Myth.²¹⁶ The insistence on interpreting the myth through the dialectic of chaos and cosmos seems to be born out of the premise that the myth is a myth of creation, with the aspect of creation demanding a formless, disorganized, primal state to be fashioned into a state of ordered human society. The mistake, then, is thinking that the aspect of creation is necessarily an *integral* part of the myth, which in light of the comparative evidence it is not. We have several examples of the myth in which it does not feature, many of them older than the examples in which it does, making the concept of creation *contingent* on the myth.²¹⁷ Sonik described chaos as the antithesis of order having been a fundamental for the Mesopotamian worldview, inserting as it did into it a “vital dynamic element” which ensured continuing growth and development. However, she then proceeds to describe the struggle

²¹⁴ The usefulness of the Hellenistic term ‘chaos’ in the Semitic context has been argued by Podella 1993, but even he admits that the term is far from unproblematic.

²¹⁵ Batto 2013, 218.

²¹⁶ Albeit Frankfort (1948, viii) pointed out the important truth that Egyptian beliefs were not uniform. The same holds true for ancient Sumerian conceptions of the world.

²¹⁷ Note also the Babylonian Theogony of Dunnu (BM 74329), where the sea is not the first element, but is produced by the first (unnamed) pair by the ploughing of a furrow, which fills with water. This is almost an antithesis of the idea of creation by the splitting of the sea into two parts. In the myth the river is also the daughter of the sea.

between order and chaos as between *the civilized world and the wilderness*, and it seems as though this particular dichotomy (and it must be noted that ‘chaos’ and ‘order’ alike may be inserted in *both* categories) would have been a much more meaningful distinction to the ancients.²¹⁸

According to Redford, the phenomenon of the cosmic struggle between land and sea, as well as fair weather and storms, was central to the mythology of the maritime cities of the ancient Levant. He writes:

In keeping with man’s tendency to humanize his environment and to bow to its inspiration by the creation of coherent narrative, this most striking of the environmental phenomena in the Eastern Mediterranean was translated into a plot motif. A raging monster, dark and foul, invades the land but meets resistance in the form of a hero, larger than life, with all the force of elemental morality behind him.²¹⁹

This passage is a representative example of the tendency of scholars to read their own interpretations into ancient myths which have often been preserved in a more or less fragmentary state. He does, however, make an interesting point that this kind of basic plot was originally a “neutral” device, and not necessarily an aetiological means of explaining creation or natural phenomena, as it has come to be known by modern scholars. He also claimed that many changes can be rung on this simple pattern, depending for instance on the context. The plot can even be transferred to the land, whereby the monster becomes “Death”,²²⁰ referring perhaps to Mot of the Ugaritic epic. There are certainly some thematic elements shared by Baal’s battle with Yamm and his battle with Mot.²²¹ But there are also considerable differences. Smith has also suggested that the story of Baal and Mot may have been patterned on the Baal and Yamm narrative, although with a different literary history.²²²

The dialectic of chaos and cosmos does not show signs of abating, despite the fact that a few critical studies have been published in recent years. E. N. Ortlund’s *Theophany and Chaaskampf: The Interpretation of Theophanic Imagery in the Baal Epic, Isaiah, and the Twelve* (2010) is, for many of its virtues, a good example of the uncritical application of the framework on the exegesis of the motif in the HB. Although it uses modern metaphor theory to examine suggested

²¹⁸ Sonik 2013, 19.

²¹⁹ Redford 1992, 44.

²²⁰ Redford 1992, 44.

²²¹ Wyatt (1990b, 212) described Mot as both symbolically antithetical and complementary to Yamm. While this is an interesting way to look at the characters and concepts, I am not sure that we possess enough information on how the NWS peoples viewed them to afford interpretations of this kind.

²²² Smith 1994b, 13.

metaphors of storm and battle in the Hebrew prophets, the application of the framework seems to hinder Ortlund from understanding the metaphor in the ANE myths of combat. The position that he argues against is that the Hebrew examples are mere metaphor, whereas the broader ANE parallels are myth (a position still held e.g. by Tsumura 2005), highlighting the mythical aspects of the Hebrew texts. In this he is correct. But he fails to also recognize the obvious metaphorical nature of the myth in other ANE texts (e.g. in the royal inscriptions in which the king descends like the Storm-Bird upon his enemies, or how the Storm-God's defeat of the sea was a metaphor for the king's victories in the real world). The myth and the metaphor existed simultaneously, and examining the myth only through the prism of primordial battle obscures the reality behind the myth, the reality which in all likelihood gave birth and occasion to it.²²³

My biggest reservation with the chaos/order interpretation is that, as already stated, few authors on the subject bother defining chaos in any scientifically significant fashion, being satisfied to merely paint a vague and emotionally appealing image of something intangible and undefinable. Wyatt even goes so far as to suggest that Chaos is undefinable by nature, even though workable definitions exist in e.g. in Thermodynamics, Classical Mechanics, and Philosophy.²²⁴ Many of these definitions disagree with the definition of Chaos as

²²³ See also Frankfort 1948, 4: "The ancients did not attempt to solve the ultimate problems confronting man by a single and coherent theory; that has been the method of approach since the time of the Greeks. Ancient thought – mythopoeic, "myth-making" thought – admitted side by side certain *limited* insights which were held to be *simultaneously* valid, each in its own proper context, each corresponding to a definite avenue of approach" (italics in the original).

²²⁴ Bertuglia & Vaio's *Nonlinearity, Chaos & Complexity: The Dynamics of Natural and Social Systems* (Oxford: 2005), for example, offers a comprehensive introduction to the concept of chaos and chaotic dynamics in the social sciences. Classical mechanics, on the other hand, defines chaos as maximum entropy, entropy being the unavailability of a system's energy to do work. In a state of maximum entropy (equilibrium), a system exists in a state of perfect internal disorder. Entropy can only be decreased locally, causing the entropy of the surrounding areas to increase, making the concept of "bringing order out of chaos" something of a paradox. See e.g. A. Greg's *Thermodynamics in Natural Systems* (Cambridge: 2005). Every scenario of creation in which division and dispersal of matter occurs actually leads away from a state of zero entropy (the state of perfect internal order where all molecules are concentrated in one place), *bringing* chaos into the Universe. In fact, in classical mechanics the Universe began with order and tends toward chaos, as the entropy of the Universe (as an isolated system) tends toward a maximum, as stated by the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. This state of affairs is, of course, opposite to what the '*Chaoskampf*' –interpretation of the mythic narratives would have us understand as the fundamental cosmological beliefs of the ancient man.

Such definitions of chaos obviously cannot be applied to the conceptual thinking of the Bronze Age scribe, but neither are the advances in Comparative Religion from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One cannot take a definition of chaos from another time and place (be it modern, early modern, or Hellenistic) and use it as a measuring stick for the conceptual thinking of earlier times. The question should be what the NWS Bronze Age scribe thought of the concept of chaos – if indeed he thought in such concepts at all, as the texts remain silent on the matter. For my own part, I see neither linguistic, narrative, philosophical, mythological,

‘uncreation’, or an undefined state preceding creation, as the very existence of entropy requires a system or a working body in order to alter its state.²²⁵ There is also something vaguely Orientalist about the descriptions of the ANE ‘primal monsters’ in the form of the Chaos Dragon as aggressive, disrespectful, and exhibiting uncontrolled sexuality, especially seeing that in royal inscriptions the dragon could just as well function as the self-designation of the Assyrian king, as well as that of his enemy.²²⁶

Although writing from the point of view of African historiography, Thomas brought up an important point about the tendency of Western scholars to view and explain the world through grand abstractions, disregarding indigenous concepts and expressions, using Western post-modern analytical concepts to explain ‘primitive’ non-modern thought and creating an essentializing contrast between the two.²²⁷ While the authentic voices of the ANE are beyond us, there is a similar tendency in the explaining of ancient concepts. But even if one wishes to see an inherent dualism in the conflict, the thematic of chaos and order is hardly the only option. Of the early commentators to the myth, e.g. Abel viewed the myth as a battle between celestial and terrestrial forces. In his description, both the Storm-God and his adversary are rather chaotic, a volatile mixture reflecting the awesome power of nature.²²⁸ Certainly this dialectic may have played into the formation of the myth, happen as it did during the process of the celestialization

nor sociological reasons to read the myth of the *Storm-God*’s armed combat with the *sea* through the prism of creating order out of chaos.

²²⁵ To be fair, most authors connecting creation to chaos do not advocate *creatio ex nihilo*, but the ordering of some kind of watery mass.

²²⁶ See Van Henten 1999, 265. Note that the term ‘ANE’ itself shows Western or Eurocentric bias. Edward Said (1978, 12) described Orientalism as follows: “It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of ‘interests’ which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts and values), power moral (as with ideas about what ‘we’ do and what ‘they’ cannot do or understand as ‘we’ do). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (italics in the original).

²²⁷ Thomas 2011. See Joosten 2013 on the effect of the ‘grand narrative’ of Bible studies on the study of the texts of the HB.

²²⁸ Abel 1933, 154.

or astralization of the religious concepts of the ancient Semitic peoples.²²⁹

For Folker Willesen, writing in the 1950s, the Baal Cycle meant all of the things discussed in the previous sections. As he succinctly put it:

it is a cultic drama, and Ba'al, 'Anat etc. are gods striving to win the hegemony=the sanctuary, and thus to renew fertility, kingdom etc. And redeem mankind, in short to recreate Cosmos.

It is possible that the narrative did have these functions. Such a broad approach, however, has little interpretative value. On the other hand, Willesen did make a very important point which seems to have been lost in later scholarship:

To the man of today who has got used to think in abstract categories, we might put it thus that it is a drama about principles, Good versus Evil, and that the persons are but stage adjuncts serving the purpose of producing the dramatic effects and making the performance intelligible to the audience. Not that the Ugaritians felt it that way – to them the gods of the play were personal, existing and real deities.²³⁰

There is indeed an important distinction to be made between the modern, scholarly perception of ancient texts and how the texts were received and understood by their ancient audience.²³¹ Special care ought to be taken particularly when applying abstract categories that may have had no corresponding idea in the thought or language of the ancient NWS cultures. With this caveat in mind, the latter part of the 20th century also saw some new developments in the interpretation of the Ugaritic myth, most prominently those made by Mark S. Smith and Nicolas Wyatt.

²²⁹ Stieglitz (1990, 83), however, seems to suggest that the Old Semitic pantheon from Ebla was already divided into celestial and terrestrial divinities. He groups Hadda the storm-god with the celestial gods, but Dagan with the terrestrial ones. Svärd (2015, 127) writes on the topic of power in ancient Assyria that the “existence of an ontological category of power in many languages does not mean that there was necessarily an ontological category of power in Assyria”. I would posit the same with regard to ‘Chaos’ in the NWS cultural sphere, although the semantic domain may well have existed in the Assyrian and Babylonian contexts.

²³⁰ Willesen 1952, 294.

²³¹ Mowinckel (2004, 56) made a point of warning about the fact that just because a certain expression, idea, or concept exists in two different religions or cultures does not guarantee that they would have been understood in the same manner or that there needs to exist a direct relationship between them. As with modern and ancient conceptions, one should not assume that the Ugaritic and Biblical authors referenced the same things even when they were using seemingly similar words or motifs. Nor do superficial or incidental similarities mean that the narratives of these societies carried the same meaning. Smith (2001b, 220f) has also discussed the problem of modern categories with regard to ancient sources.

2.1.3 The Political Myth

2.1.3.1 In the Works of Mark S. Smith

Mark S. Smith, commonly recognized as the foremost expert on the Baal Cycle following his *magna opera* in *The Baal Cycle* (volumes I and II),²³² was among the first scholars to suggest that there may have been underlining political motivations for the writing of the Baal Cycle; he did this in a foot-note to his article in UF 18 (1986), “*Interpreting the Ba‘al Cycle*”.²³³ Smith also expounded on the theory in his 1990 book *The Early History of God* and in his 1994 Ugaritish-Biblische Literatur article “*Mythology and Myth-making in Ugaritic and Israelite Literatures*”, wherein he connects this political use of the conflict myth to texts of the HB, particularly the psalms. This is not to suggest that the concept of kingship had not been a factor in interpreting the Baal Cycle even before Smith’s article (e.g. in 1972 P. J. Van Zijl considered kingship the main theme of the Baal-Yam motif).²³⁴

While the understanding of the myth in its political context is not diametrically opposed to the older views which espoused myths as narrations with the magical function meant to guarantee the existence of entities with which they were preoccupied – which is a view still held by Müller²³⁵ – it is a reframing of the interpretation of the myth’s function. Smith himself offered in his writings a four-pronged historical survey of research, and divided the theories of the interpretation of the Baal Cycle as follows: 1) Ritual and Seasonal, 2) Cosmogonic, 3) Historical and Political, and the 4) Limited Exaltation of Baal, which is his own synthesis of the previous theories.²³⁶ My own division of the

²³² A third and final volume is to follow, but it had not yet been published by the time of the writing of this dissertation.

²³³ Also Smith 1994b, 103–105, 296, 309; Smith & Pitard 2009, 16–60.

²³⁴ Van Zijl 1972, 13.

²³⁵ Müller 2014, 257. I do not read the myth, as he does, as either legitimizing *existing* entities or as an *explanation* for the world, but rather as a justification of the prevailing (and desired) *social organization* vis-à-vis power structures. The hegemonic narrative seeks to confirm the existing order and to guarantee the continuation of the same. On p. 266, Müller states that the myth had a political dimension in addition to (“as well”) serving as a “mythological explanation of natural phenomena”. While I am not arguing against the use of the myth to explain natural phenomena – although I am not entirely certain in what fashion it had this “explanatory” function (as opposed to a ‘descriptive’ one? One could ask how the “imagery of the fighting weather-god” *explains* the thunder storm) – I argue that the political function of the myth is its *primary function*, its very *raison d’être*. There is nothing aetiological about the Storm-God’s conquering of the sea, especially deep in the Syrian Desert.

²³⁶ His review of these theories can be found in Smith 1994b, 60ff.

historical survey differs from his, mainly in giving the theory of the *Chaoskampf* its own category, separate from the cosmogonic interpretations.

Smith presented a concise review of the diametric oppositions between Israelite and Canaanite religions in previous research, and he also reviewed the new dichotomies which have since come to replace them (official/popular, domestic/public, male/female, etc.).²³⁷ In recent research, the holistic view and the dialectic of continuum and change seem to be the most popular lenses through which the ancient texts are viewed. Joining in this tradition, my intention is purely to compare and contrast references to the Combat Myth in the Ugaritic corpus and the psalms, on the one hand, and the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and specific verses of Biblical poetry, on the other.

Smith and his pioneering writings have had a significant influence on the changing ideological climate in the comparative studies of Ugaritic and Biblical literature. In *Ugaritic Studies and Israelite Religion: A Retrospective View* (2002), he writes:

These older paradigms, in their various configurations, were massive in their synthesis and explanatory power, and it is no wonder that they held sway for decades. However, they made the overarching intellectual assumption that Biblical studies and the Biblical texts set the agenda for Ugaritic research. This presupposition, though productive in many ways, was costly in its effects.²³⁸

Smith saw the function of Baal as that of the divine protector of Ugarit, which gave political influence to the Baal cult of the city. He suggested that the Baal Cycle was written to advance the values of the monarchic dynasty. He likened the “weak” Baal of the Cycle to the city of Ugarit itself, which was caught between Egypt and the Hittite Empire like Baal was caught between Mot and Yamm.²³⁹ To Smith, the myth was unquestionably political in nature, and it was political in the sense that it reflected Ugarit’s political position in the international system of the LBA. But what Smith saw as the central theme of the Baal Cycle was the building of Baal’s palace, not his attainment of kingship as such, although he does recognize kingship as the aim toward which Baal strives.²⁴⁰ He found the enthronement scene echoing throughout the myth, epitomizing the religio-political meaning of the metaphor. In fact, the recurrence of this motif is something he has used in order to argue for the coherence and unity of the text of the Cycle.²⁴¹

²³⁷ Smith 2002a, 19–20.

²³⁸ Smith 2002a, 19.

²³⁹ Smith 1997a, 84–85; see (1994b, 105), in which he mentions Ugarit’s “limited political situation lying between the great powers of the ANE” as the impetus for the myth.

²⁴⁰ Smith & Pitard 2009, 1–3, 90ff.

²⁴¹ Smith & Pitard 2009, 7–11, 291. He calls it the “throne scene”, as most of the occurrences only

Smith has also suggested that the cultic and ritual materials of the Northern Baal religion were used in Southern Palestine, in connection with Yahweh, to such an extent that it would only be natural for the royal institution(s) of ancient Israel to have inherited the political function of the NWS conflict myth:

Just as the battle between the West Semitic Storm god and the cosmic Sea served to support the dynasty at Mari and quite possibly at Ugarit, so too ancient Israel used this imagery to affirm Yahweh's support of the monarch.²⁴²

My own thesis could be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate the veracity of this assertion.

In other writings, Smith seems to have also favoured the cosmic interpretation of the myth. In *The Baal Cycle*, he writes:

Yamm and Mot are cosmic figures, and they show Baal's heroism in equally cosmic stature and proportion. Furthermore, as Yamm represents chaotic waters and Mot signifies death in its cosmic proportions, Baal embodies order and life in equal, if not greater, universal proportions.²⁴³

The problem with these approaches is the lack of definition for the terms used, such as we find, for example, in the concept of the "chaotic waters". What are chaotic waters, and how does this concept differ from the ordinary nature of water? And what precisely is it about the character of the raging storm or the Storm-God that embodies order?

Smith has advocated using the Ugaritic texts to sharpen our scholarly understanding of the texts of the HB and the cultural landscape from which they sprang, suggesting that their differences are better viewed against the "larger similarities" between them. While Smith has criticized the "Bible-centricism" of Ugaritic studies and the reduction of the Ugaritic material to a mere mirror through which we can better understand the Biblical texts, he frequently seems to fall into the very trap he cautions others to avoid. For example, he described Ugaritic studies as necessary for "situating ancient Israel and the Bible within their larger historical contexts" in the very same article he eschewed the views.²⁴⁴

While he is famous for locating ancient Israel as part of the broader NWS cultural sphere, one cannot help but observe the granting of a special status or preference to ancient Israel. Locating ancient Israel and ancient Ugarit in their broader cultural contexts, separately and (with certain reservations) even together, is certainly a valiant venture, but such efforts must come with no small amount of

contain a mention of a throne, not actual enthronement.

²⁴² Smith 1997a, 86.

²⁴³ Smith 1994b, 19.

²⁴⁴ Smith 2002s, 27.

caution. To claim that the area of Palestine has played no special role in world history would be disingenuous with regard to later developments, but projecting the later geo-political and cultural significance of the area onto the past, which existed prior to the Roman conquest only in the fantasies of Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 11.317– 345), is likewise intellectually dishonest.²⁴⁵ The texts of the HB do matter, and they are of general interest due to their tradition history, and their later uses have ascertained their preservation for the study of modern scholars. Above and beyond this, they are also in and of themselves a source into the investigation of the antiquity of the Eastern Mediterranean and the NWS cultures of the Iron Age. And yet we cannot begin our investigation with the assumption that they reveal to us something categorically different from the witness of the other ancient textual sources. It is not their content that sets them apart from the other sources, but their date and their lengthy redaction history.

In recent years, Smith's views have been espoused especially by his student Aaron Tugendhaft, who examined the political use of the text of the Baal Cycle in his 2012 dissertation "*Baal Is Our King*": *Politics and Narrative at the End of the Bronze Age* (NYU). His approach to the material is rather different from mine, however, as his project attempted to locate the context of the Baal Cycle in the historical situation of the kingdom of Ugarit in the latter years of the city in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE, building on Smith's idea that the text reflects the historical reality of the city between the Hittite and Egyptian empires.²⁴⁶ Tugendhaft has also written several articles touching on the topic of

²⁴⁵ It is often claimed that the area of Palestine formed some kind of nexus due to its location, which absorbed influences from its surrounding cultures, and that its central location would have made it strategically interesting to the ancient empires. See Mumford 2014; Klengel 2014; Schneider 2014; Elayi 2014. Green 2003, 219, for example, calls 'Canaan' the "land bridge between the continents", whereas the recorded military campaigns of Mesopotamian rulers habitually took the route via the Upper Euphrates, going around this land bridge to meet their Egyptian counterparts. Its lack of notoriety in ancient texts suggests its relative unimportance, existing on the periphery of ancient empires, largely bypassed by both the Via Maris and the King's Highway – a few northern locations like Megiddo notwithstanding. According to Jidejian (1992, 80) it was actually the area of modern Lebanon that functioned as the crossroads of these cultures. See also Weippert 1988, 645.

²⁴⁶ Smith 1994b, 105. E.g. Tugendhaft (2012a, 368) chooses to translate the Ugaritic *'bd* as vassal in KTU 1.2 I, creating a relationship of vassal and suzerain between Baal and Yamm, a relationship which reflects both the reality of Ugarit's position between Egypt and Hatti, and critically examined the LBA system of vassalage itself (on p. 369, he writes: "the poem uses contemporary diplomatic conventions to evoke relationships among the poem's protagonists"). But the divine economy of the Baal Cycle does not need to reflect on the historical situation of the kingdom of Ugarit in the LBA – the divine economy reflects the economy of the Bronze Age kingdom because it was both the *basis* for it, just as it at the same time served as an ideal *model* which the earthly economies sought to emulate. The divine economies resembled the mortal ones because they were written by and for people who lived in these economies. The

the politics of the Baal Cycle (2010, 2012a, 2012b), which I engage in this dissertation.

In *Unsettling Sovereignty: Politics and Poetics in the Baal Cycle* (2012), he writes:

The Baal Cycle does not set up a clear, temporally distinguished opposition between current order and primordial disorder. As a result, conflict takes on a different meaning in the Ugaritic poem – it is a constituent element of political life, not a means by which the political overcomes the primordial. In the Baal Cycle political rule does not bring about an eradication of disorder. The Baal Cycle’s non-cosmogonic employment of the *topos* of divine battle against the sea is consistent with the poem’s representation of political rank as unstable and ambiguous.²⁴⁷

It seems to me that Tugendhaft and I are in agreement in terms of what the Baal Cycle *is not*, but we have different ideas as to what it *is*. While I agree with him absolutely that the focus of the text is political and may contain some references to the political climate in which it was written, the problem with reading the text as a metaphor for the political context of Late Bronze Age Ugarit is that, because of the archetypal elements in the narrative, it could easily be read as a metaphor for other historical contexts as well.

In fact, the narrative would seem to fit much better with the political climate of the Mari of the OB period, where we find a ready cast of characters for the story: the Baal of Zimri-Lim, the Anat of Shiptu, El of Yarim-Lim, and the Yamm of Hammurapi. It could also be framed in the time of Idrimi of Alalakh or that of David and Saul. Sasson has pointed out how the narrative of Zimri-Lim’s life resembles the “melodramatic Biblical portraits of Moses, Jacob, and David” *because we seek out certain familiar patterns in the narratives (déjà entendu), making “frequent yet unobtrusive conjunctions among biographer, subject, and audience”*.²⁴⁸ This is why historical narratives seemingly repeat time after time. But the reason for the malleability of the narrative is in its function: every successive king had to take the narrative and make it his own, to (re-)historicize the myth and to make it relevant for both his own and subsequent generations.

One of the most poignant observations Tugendhaft makes is that, while the corpus of texts in which we find the motif of the Combat Myth has grown

text uses contemporary diplomatic terms, because they were the only kinds of terms they knew to describe the divine realm with, but at the same time the divine realm was the ideal model for arranging the mundane economy. This is also reflected in the use of patrimonial vocabulary in international diplomacy (e.g. brother, father, servant), which had the function of a *convention*. We can glean some information about the conventions of the era, but to attempt to use the mythological text to glean historical information on the political organization of the kingdom is a dangerous exercise, as mythological texts can only offer a view to them ‘through a glass, darkly’.

²⁴⁷ Tugendhaft 2012a, 368.

²⁴⁸ Sasson 1998, 455.

incrementally since the time of Gunkel, the tendency in scholarship has been to approach the texts with the same questions: focusing on tracking down sources of influence and transmission.²⁴⁹ While the question of directions of influence is something which I discuss at some length in this thesis, I have done it in the interest of contextualizing the myth, and I agree with Tugendhaft that the question of which way the myth influenced the Biblical texts should not be the central focus of an investigation into the myth.

I also agree with Tugendhaft that *EE* and the Mari oracle FM 7 38 have exerted excessive influence on the interpretation of the Baal Cycle over the years – although in the case of the oracle, the Baal Cycle has likewise influenced its interpretation to a great degree. Tugendhaft has devised a typology for a better understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the motif: synchronic and diachronic applications (with regard to whether transgenerational conflict is present) and the eschatological axis (whether the victory is wrought in the past-present or in the future). He uses this typology (which I would call a matrix) to suggest categorical differences between the Babylonian, Ugaritic, and HB traditions of the myth.²⁵⁰ I agree with him that a typological approach may be able to create distinctions between the mythic traditions more apparently than the tracing of influence and transmission, but their distinctive characteristics do not preclude them from having shared an underlying basis.

Tugendhaft also argued against the use of the myth as a vessel of political propaganda to reinforce the position of the king as the representative of the divine order on earth; he suggested that the text in fact functions as a critique or subversion of this position. This seems unlikely, due to the fact that the myth continued to be used in this way in the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean for a millennium after the destruction of Ugarit.²⁵¹ It is on this point that our thinking diverges. Even though we accept the same basic premise (i.e. the political nature

²⁴⁹ Tugendhaft 2013, 194: “This procedure makes sense if the goal is to plot a motif’s historical trajectory but often stands in the way of understanding the meaning of the material in our possession”. The direction of influence was seen as the central question, e.g. by Müller 2008, 63.

²⁵⁰ Tugendhaft 2013, 197. On p. 198 he writes: “These three cases attest to three entirely different approaches to understanding the relationship among politics, history, and the divine – all three making use of the combat motif”.

²⁵¹ Frankfort (1948, 43) pointed out that people showed their affection to the institution of kingship by placing it in the centre of their entertainment literature, which was probably one of the reasons for the writing of the Baal Cycle at Ugarit, functioning to reinforce the very foundations of the institution. Sasson (2001, 331) made an important point that we must not accept the information of ancient political texts at face value but must examine the texts for the motivations behind their writing.

of the myth), the conclusions that we draw are in some ways diametrically opposite. The same holds true with those of his mentor, Smith. In spite of this relatively minor difference in opinion, and while the broad intellectual debt of my dissertation to the works of Smith cannot be overstated, Smith's advocacy on taking the 'scenic route' while traversing the historical and cultural distance between Ugarit and ancient Israel has also served as an inspiration.²⁵²

2.1.3.2 In the Works of Nicolas Wyatt

This section contains an introduction to the theories and discussion on the topic found in the works of Nicolas Wyatt, who has been the foremost proponent of the idea that the Combat Myth is intimately connected with royal ideology.²⁵³ While Wyatt also saw the function of the Baal Cycle as fundamentally political, his understanding of *how* it was political differs from Smith's *Realpolitik* view more in terms of the use and function of the myth than in what the myth symbolized. Unlike Smith, Wyatt did not believe that historical information on the political situation of Ugarit could at least primarily be gained from the Cycle,²⁵⁴ nor can actual royal protocol be extracted from its poetry.²⁵⁵ To him, the Combat Myth belonged to a royal context specifically.²⁵⁶

Wyatt, for his part, did not think that all of the possible references to the Combat Myth in the HB were obviously cosmogonic, even though the thematic of chaos and order appears in his writings. While there is a certain progression to his thought over the years, at least at one juncture he suggested that these remnants of the myth in the HB dealt with divine presence in the world, which Yahweh's triumph over primal chaos ascertained.²⁵⁷ Wyatt's translation and interpretation of

²⁵² Smith 2002a, 23.

²⁵³ While Wyatt's articles republished in "There's such Divinity Doth Hedge a King" and "The Mythic Mind" were originally published in various journals and *Festschriften* (listed in Wyatt 2005, ix), which I have had at my perusal, I have opted to make use of and refer to the articles in later collections due to the fact that Wyatt edited, cross-referenced, updated the translations, and standardized the terminology therein for the benefit of the newer publications. See Wyatt 2005, vii. So as not to mislead the reader, I have added the original year of the publication in brackets after the publication year of the collection.

²⁵⁴ Nonetheless, he has suggested that the wedding of Niqmaddu III or IV to the Hittite princess Ehli-Nikkal was the occasion for the writing of the myth. Wyatt 2005b, 704–705; 2005c, 251–252.

²⁵⁵ Wyatt 2005b, 704.

²⁵⁶ Wyatt 2005b, 701; 2005c, 18.

²⁵⁷ Wyatt 2003, 151.

the Baal Cycle specifically may be found in the 2nd edition of *The Religious Texts from Ugarit* (2002), but the themes of the political nature of the Baal Cycle are touched upon in various works throughout his long career. For the past two decades, Wyatt has been the most prolific proponent of the theory that the Baal Cycle was written for the benefit of the Ugaritic institution of kingship. According to Wyatt,

this particular mythology, the Baal cycle, is intimately connected with the themes of order and power, the chief concerns of kingship.²⁵⁸

This is likely true of all versions of the Combat Myth.

Wyatt's *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* (1996) is an extremely important contribution to the study of ancient political ideologies and the reading of the myths in the Hebrew and Ugaritic traditions as manifestations of the political order. He dedicated well over a quarter of the book to the Combat Myth and its reflection on kingship. According to him, the motive for Baal's contests was in attaining kingship, a position with which one can heartily agree. In *Myths of Power*, Wyatt also tackled the question of our engagement with ancient thought in ancient texts, coming to the conclusion that:

It is not in fact possible simply to enter the mind of ancient writers, because even though we can learn a great deal about what *they* thought, we can never really forget how *we* think. In consequence we cannot ourselves actually think as they thought. We can never forget our presuppositions, even if we are in practice unconscious of them.²⁵⁹ (italics in the original)

This is an extremely important point to factor into our readings of the ancient texts.

Wyatt has written numerous articles on the topic and touched upon it in many articles on other areas, but two articles which pertain to the political nature of the Baal Cycle warrant special mention in this context: *Ilimilku's Ideological Programme: Ugaritic Royal Propaganda, and a Biblical Postscript* (1997) and *The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit* (2005b), where he expounds the view that the myth was consciously crafted to advance the political ambitions of the Ugaritic monarchy. Especially pertinent is his suggestion that every local petty king presented himself to his people as the representative of the Storm-God with

²⁵⁸ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 18, following Petersen & Woodward 1977. According to Petersen & Woodward (p. 234), there are two main functionalist views of myth as reflecting social organization: the first holds that myths serve to reinforce and legitimize social relationships, and the other holds that myths have a social-psychological function, which serves to integrate or reconcile the individual into a larger social context. The first theory, which Wyatt seems to favour, was advanced by Radcliffe-Brown 1952.

²⁵⁹ Wyatt 1996, 7.

the authority of the charter received from the god, which assured divine sanction for their military campaigns; Wyatt called this a “cliché for legitimacy”.²⁶⁰

Wyatt saw Baal as the dynastic god of the city and the patron deity of its kingship, which is why the Baal Cycle was an important tool in the legitimization of the earthly rule of the king of Ugarit. It is on this proposition that my thesis hinges, for what I suggest is that the same was true for the kings of Pre-Exilic Palestine: they likewise used the Combat Myth between the dynastic god and the sea to legitimize their political rule. The only detail in his discussion that I disagree with is the role of chaos and creation in the mythic tradition.²⁶¹ My goal is to demonstrate the veracity of his suggestions and to explore their background in the Amorite political system. Wyatt also underlined the continuity between the Ugaritic texts and the texts of the HB in the fact that the names of the monsters opposing the Storm-God cannot be found anywhere else outside of these sources.²⁶² This is a sign of the importance of the motifs of the NWS Combat Myth for *any* comparative study of ANE texts.

In addition to the mountain of research on the Ugaritic texts provided by Wyatt over the years, and the use of his personal library in the summer of 2014, this dissertation also owes a deeper philosophical debt to Professor Wyatt. While respectful of the differences between the Ugaritic and Hebrew traditions, Wyatt believed that it was nonetheless possible to find similarities and affinities between them, and through these be feasible to use the texts of one tradition to aid in the *understanding* of the other.²⁶³ Wyatt’s courage in engaging with the texts is commendable, and while the particulars and minutiae of his interpretations may be debated, scholarship would suffer without such individuals willing to look for new avenues of research and to try new thoughts on for size. This same conviction has allowed me to formulate the method of **textual triangulation** which I have used in the writing of this dissertation, interrogating not only diachronic texts but also the traditions implied by them; this method is explained in more detail in the

²⁶⁰ Wyatt 2005b, 698–699.

²⁶¹ Tugendhaft (2013, 196) likewise notes that Wyatt’s insistence on the use of the term *Chaoskampf* obfuscates the way in which the Baal Cycle makes use of the narrative tradition “without telling a story about the conquest of chaos”. However, his warning that the affinity between the mythic tradition and political thinking should not be taken for a “fixed political message” seems misplaced. The tradition is evidently malleable, but this does not preclude it containing a fixed political message, functioning as the myth does as an answer to Foucault’s fundamental question about power.

²⁶² Wyatt 2003, 141, 149.

²⁶³ Wyatt 2005a, 31.

subsequent section on method (Chapter 3). In addition to the Combat Myth, it is also useful to review what is known about NWS kingship in general, which is the topic of the next chapter.

2.2 North West Semitic Kingship

This section contains an introduction to what is known of ancient NWS kingship in current research and what kinds of materials are available to us for researching the topic. According to Mowinckel's classic thesis, Hebrew kingship did not differ from kingship elsewhere in the ANE in any essential feature.²⁶⁴ While such an assertion was welcome when Biblical kingship was still seen as a category unto itself, it also disregards facets of ancient Semitic kingship that were peculiar to the Semitic peoples, especially in the Syro-Palestinian area and with specific regard to the Levantine littoral. Of course, there is no one-fit-for-all model of kingship that can be applied to all the areas inhabited by the speakers of Semitic languages, but there are certain features that do seem to separate the institutions of kingship of these peoples from those of their immediate neighbours, such as the Sumerians, the Egyptians, and the Hittites. The modern connotations of 'king' are also not directly transferable to ancient NWS kings, which is why I largely prefer the admittedly Hellenistic term of monarch which, while anachronistic, is a useful description of the office of the NWS sovereign, even though during the time period under investigation the monarch existed either in a system of sponsored kingship or one of outright vassalage.

Talon described the roles of the Assyrian king as those of ruler, father, protector, and conqueror, whose duty was to keep the darkness away from the empire.²⁶⁵ To these roles, which are applicable to most forms of ancient Semitic kingship, may be added the roles of judge and (adopted) son to the monarchic divinity – keeping in mind that the semantic field of the NWS “judge” comprised more than merely passing judgements. In the ANE, especially in the Sumero-Babylonian cultural sphere in Mesopotamia, it seems that several gods of different domains could be used to legitimize a king's rule, and often were. In iconographic representations, especially in the so-called presentation scene, the king is brought

²⁶⁴ Mowinckel 2004, 50. Also Loretz 2002, 381.

²⁶⁵ Talon 2005b, 100.

before a god whose symbols change from representation to representation. The sun-god Utu or Shamash, the moon god Nanna or Sin, or the king of the gods and god of wisdom Ea/Enki could all be used as a source and guarantor of earthly rule for the human monarch. But for the NWS peoples, the Storm-God of the Upper Euphrates was arguably the most important divinity, and thus the most important source of royal legitimation.²⁶⁶

Loretz submitted that it was the king's position as a mediator between the gods and the people that also made him a leader of the cult.²⁶⁷ Talon further described the king of the Assyrian royal inscriptions as "one in accord with the gods, a perfect image of Aššur on earth. The king had to be simultaneously an accomplished warrior, always victorious; a great hunter, the image of Marduk vanquishing chaos; a just and honest judge, the likeness of Šamaš, god of justice; a legitimate heir, the continuation of an unbroken dynasty whose origins were as remote as the Flood".²⁶⁸ Many of these qualifiers are also met by the kings of the Amorite tradition, and perhaps *mutatis mutandis*, the ancient Semitic traditions at large, excepting the last; the drawing of legitimacy from the succession of ancestors going back to the Flood seems to be a Sumerian peculiarity, which strikes one as inimical to the penchant for usurpation among the ancient Semitic kings.

One further piece of indirect evidence for the close association of the king and the god particularly in Biblical texts – or even that the king was considered the god's vice-regent, "God's agent on earth"²⁶⁹ – may be garnered from the lack of representation for queens or kings' consorts in the Biblical narratives. G. Rendsburg suggested that there would have been an inherent danger in elevating the king's wife to the level of official consort *vis-à-vis* the Asherah of the pre- or non-Deuteronomistic cultus of ancient Israel. There is no reason that queens could not have had more prominent roles in the Biblical narrative, had it not been for the persistently close association of god and king. A king representing a monolatric god could not have a wife in the narrative.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ See Schwemer 2001.

²⁶⁷ Loretz 1990, 205.

²⁶⁸ Talon 2005b, 100.

²⁶⁹ Rendsburg 2007, 101.

²⁷⁰ It is certainly not only among the NWS peoples that the figures of king and god became somewhat confused. Kühn 2005, 79–99, writing on the dynastic *Totenkult* among the Nabateans, also remarks that it was especially the divinizing of the deceased king that had an important and stabilizing social role, comparable to that of the living king. On p. 359 she makes the observation that in a Late Babylonian list of underworld gods, the Semitic god *mlk*

There are many examples of female characters in the Biblical texts that do seem to portray a role similar to that of a queen or to a goddess in other ANE literatures, such as Sarah or Rachel, who are denied the outright title of queen, but who are clearly queens in effect. In later Israelite religion, where Yahweh alone was the ruler of the universe, he could have no consort – and neither could the king.²⁷¹ Of course, one must contend with the fact that the Biblical texts are the product of a patriarchal, male-dominated era, and that it is only in rare exceptions, such as queen Šibtu of Zimri-Lim, that we learn of the queens and consorts of other NWS kings, even in cultures in whose cultuses goddesses played more prominent and important roles.

Kingship, as we find it in the Biblical texts, also presents us with an example, albeit a late one, of NWS kingship. The problem with the Biblical witness is that many of the texts describing the so-called ‘monarchic era’, the reigns of David and Solomon, and the subsequent ‘divided monarchy’ and the monarchic successions of Israel and Judah, are heavily mythologizing, and much later than the times they purport to describe. Kingship had a central position in ancient Israelite or Hebrew society in Pre-Exilic times. According to Loretz, the roots of this tradition are deep within the soil of ‘Canaanite’ tradition,²⁷² and so they may be.

It is likely that most polities of the Palestinian area had their own kings and chieftains, and this seems to be corroborated by textual evidence from the OB period (Hazor, Laish) and the Amarna period (Jerusalem). Hebron and Shechem are also indicated as locations of ancient kingship in the HB. While in the time of the Omrides a larger polity centred on the city of Samaria seems to have conquered these petty kingdoms and forged them into a larger political unit, it is on the basis of comparative evidence from the cities of the eastern Mediterranean that we may suspect that the political mythologies of these petty kingdoms must have been similar to that of the other NWS polities. On the basis of the remnants

appears as LUGAL *ša má-rí^{ki}*, “the king of Mari”. The association of the king of an actual place with the divinity would strongly suggest that dead kings were indeed divinized. But an amount of blending seems to have taken place also between the living king and the god who acted as the guarantor of his sovereignty. Kühn further suggests that the *mlkm*, which appear in the Ugaritic pantheon lists KTU 1.47:33 and 1.118:32, may have signified the royal dead. While sometimes it appears that *mlk* denoted an earthly king that was divinized, sometimes gods also bore the title *mlk*, king, e.g. *mlk nhr* in KTU 1.9:17 (and of course, famously, Baal following his defeat of Yamm).

²⁷¹ Rendsburg 2007, 101.

²⁷² Loretz 1990, 203.

of this political mythology in the much later texts of the HB, we may also suspect that the same political mythology had been in the use of these larger kingdoms of the Iron Age.²⁷³

When it comes to other late witnesses to ancient Semitic kingship, while Strabo is writing during the first years of the Roman Empire, being nearly a millennium removed from the period of time under inquiry in this study, his description of the social organization of the Semitic city states on the eastern Mediterranean seaboard still brings us two millennia closer to the time in question:

Now in ancient times the Aradians were governed independently by kings, as was also the case with each of the other Phoenician cities; but afterwards the Persians, and then the Macedonians, and today the Romans, have reduced them to their present order of government. The Aradians, however, together with the other Phoenicians, subjected themselves to the Syrian kings as friends of theirs; (*Geography* 16.2.14).

Strabo's description of the social organization also matches what is currently held regarding the social organization of NWS city states in the Bronze Age: that they were governed largely independently by local kings or equivalent rulers of alternative styling,²⁷⁴ even when the petty kingdoms had been annexed into the more prominent ANE empires, and that diplomatic ties of varying strength existed between some of the city states based on personal, familial, and commercial ties.²⁷⁵

Likewise commenting on later Semitic peoples, the Phoenicians, the Roman historian Pomponius Mela described them in his *De Chronographia* 1.12 as people who excelled in both war and peace, in seafaring, and in the administration of the kingdom. It seems that even in the Roman era there was something particularly commendable about ancient Semitic kingship,²⁷⁶

²⁷³ See Finkelstein 2013, 3: "The political ideology of the Deuteronomistic History in the Bible depicts the reality after the fall of the northern kingdom. It is Judah-centric, arguing that all territories that once belonged to Israel must be ruled by a Davidic king, that all Hebrews must accept the rule of the Davidic dynasty, and that all Hebrews must worship the God of Israel at the temple in Jerusalem".

²⁷⁴ It seems as though most of the city states of the Syro-Levantine area were governed by 'princes', although kings are also mentioned among the rulers in the Amarna texts (EA 45–380). I have discussed the possibility that the title of king in the OB period was dependent on the sponsorship of a senior king, possibly the king of Yamhad, see Töyräänvuori 2015. It is difficult to define ancient terms such as LUGAL, *šarru*, *rubû*, etc. precisely, but it seems as though the title *mlk* especially required some kind of feat or justification to legitimize its use.

²⁷⁵ See Luciani 2014; Jidejian 1992, 24.

²⁷⁶ One must take note here of Suetonius (*Calig.* 46.1) and Cassius Dio (*Hist. Rom.* 59.25, 1–3), both recounting a story with the intended purpose of describing the madness of emperor Caligula, of how, during a military campaign to Britannia, the emperor had arranged his troops and their weaponry on the shore of the sea with the intended purpose, implied by the authors, of waging war against the sea. According to Suetonius, the emperor even erected a light-house to celebrate his victory over the sea. While neither author was a contemporary of Caligula and

suggesting that, without desiring to make any sort of essentialist assertions, according to the ancients there was something different about ancient Semitic kingship compared with other forms of kingship.²⁷⁷

One of the aspects of kingship that seems to have been shared by the ancient Semitic peoples was the symbolic adoption of the monarch by the divinity that acted as the protector of kingship or the guarantor of the monarchic authority of the king. Usue described Israel as a theocratic state in which Yahweh ruled through kings and prophets, and in which the kings were regarded as Yahweh's adopted sons, derivatively.²⁷⁸ While few overt witnesses to this conception exist, we have vestiges of the tradition in the Ugaritic and Biblical texts, suggesting, although not strictly witnessing, that a royal adoption may have accompanied the installation of a king.²⁷⁹ According to Craigie, ancient Israel shared a conviction that Yahweh was present at the coronation of the kings, and that it was the authority of the monarchic god that was in a metaphorical sense present in the reign of the Davidic kings.²⁸⁰ The question of the divine adoption of the ancient Semitic kings is one that I will return to throughout this work.

The problem with the reconstruction of such rituals from the texts is that very few texts give us actual rituals of coronation. We know very little about the coronation and enthronement of ancient Semitic kings, if indeed coronations even took place. Engnell discussed an Assyrian coronation ritual, which has sometimes been used as a model for all ancient Semitic kings. According to him, while the ceremony itself is dated to "Assyrian times", it can "with certainty be antedated".²⁸¹ He gives no argument for why we are to assume that this is the

the clear purpose of the stories is to emphasize the infantilism and madness of the monarch, the incident is curious with regard to the traditions discussed in this thesis. Caligula spent some of his youth in Syria with his father Germanicus, and according to Suetonius (52.1), Caligula often appeared in public holding a thunderbolt or a trident, which Suetonius calls the 'emblems of the gods', and would dress himself in the breastplate of Alexander the Great, which he had taken from his sarcophagus. If Caligula had sought to emulate Alexander the great, or Suetonius drew material from Alexandrine histories to make such implications, it is possible that the Combat Myth underlies this incident, at least in the sense of an adapted intellectual tradition.

²⁷⁷ According to Machiavelli (*Il principe*, Chapter VI), the power one seizes with one's own ability is the most stable form of power. Such rulers, he tells us, akin to Moses, Cyrus, and Romulus, acquire their principalities with difficulty, but keep them with ease.

²⁷⁸ Usue 2007, 83. Also Wilson 1987, 217, "Jerusalemite kings apparently did at least claim to be sons of Yahweh, even if they did not claim to be divine themselves".

²⁷⁹ Note that the names of the fathers of kings did not feature in royal inscriptions until the OB period, even with respect to the "fundamental relevance of the inheritance of the office". Sallaberger 2005, 97.

²⁸⁰ Craigie 1983, 65.

²⁸¹ Engnell 1967, 17.

case. It seems that Šamaš-šuma-ukin had “grasped the hand of Marduk” upon accepting the throne of Babylon, but whether or not the hand refers to a specific prestige weapon, his inauguration cannot be viewed as standard practice, as it coincided with the restoration of the Akītu festival to the city.²⁸²

While Engnell’s discussion must be lauded for its attempt at synthesizing the evidence available to him at the time, it still seems to suffer from a compulsion to use evidence from one context to try and fill in the blank spaces in another context. While it can be a method of valuable but limited use, and is not unlike the textual triangulation I have attempted in this study, it must be employed with extreme care. The reservations in the evidence of the textual record must be made plain, and speculation must be emphasized as speculation.

The shared cultural space is the reason it is not only wholly unsurprising that we should find vestiges of the mythology of divine combat scattered across an area encompassing the eastern Mediterranean from Ugarit all the way down to Gaza, containing local flavours and variations of the myth but all containing the same basic narrative – it is indeed to be expected. This is why I do not think that the myth can be tied to any one particular geographic location – and several natural formations have been suggested as the theatres to which the myth would have been tied or where it originated – as the myth would have existed organically in many places at the same time. So while the same myth was used by most, if not all, the kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean, each one of them had a local version, the one and true iteration, which gave their local ruler the true and tried and tested rule of heaven. I will discuss these topics throughout this study.

One of the factors complicating the study of ancient NWS religion and culture – and indeed kingship – is that relatively little is known about it. We know much more of the Sumerian pantheon than of the pantheons of the Semitic peoples of Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean, due to the cultural dominance through writing that Sumerian religious conceptions held among the later East Semitic Akkadians and NWS Amorites who adopted the Sumerian writing system. Lambert claimed that we know “infinitely less about the Semitic than the Sumerian gods”.²⁸³ Incidentally, the best witnesses for ancient NWS

²⁸² Nielsen 2012, 11–12. But note that Šamaš-šuma-ukin seemed to be recreating an act performed by Nebuchadrezzar I, who “grasped the hand of Bel” following his military victory against Elam. With the earlier king, there is no connection between coronation and the grasping of the hand of the deity.

²⁸³ Lambert 1985a, 532.

kingship are the same as the best witnesses for the Combat Myth.

Lambert also held that for the sake of progress, material from widely separated places and from distinct periods will have to be used for making even tentative conclusions,²⁸⁴ which is an exercise fraught with danger. It must also be added that we know less about NWS gods than we do about the East Semitic ones due to the fact that the Akkadian culture merged with the Sumerian over time. But the question of the origin of the traditions is not insignificant when examining royal legitimation, inasmuch as the royal inscriptions do not present us with a uniform view of kingship in the ANE.²⁸⁵ One of the best sources for information on kingship in the HB is in poetic texts, which is why I will outline the way in which poetic texts can be used in a historical investigation in the next section.

2.3 North West Semitic Poetry

2.3.1 Word Pairs and Poetic Vocabulary

This section contains an introduction to Hebrew and NWS poetics and the mechanics thereof.²⁸⁶ Particular attention is paid to the word-pairs and vocabulary that are relevant to the thesis. The special features of Biblical poetry and what separates it from prose texts was discussed by R. Alter in *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (1985).²⁸⁷ For a recent study comparing Hebrew and Ugaritic literary composition with special regard to poetry, see Pardee's *The Ugaritic Texts and the*

²⁸⁴ Lambert 1985a, 532.

²⁸⁵ I fundamentally disagree with Sallaberger 2005, 97, who claims that there is “no need to connect the model [the erosion of historical details in royal inscriptions in favour of timeless and universal representations] with particular ethnic entities (Sumerian, Akkadian, Amorite), with languages, with political changes or with assumed migrations”. The witness of the inscriptions is hardly uniform, and such details are crucial to their understanding. Sallaberger may not be wrong in associating some of the variation to the divide between centre and periphery (p. 97–98), but describing Mari (“where a narrative of royal deeds in simple, historical terms is more common”) as representing the periphery hardly does the kingdom justice geographically or politically, even if his focus is on the Early Dynastic period and only makes sense if one has accepted the indoctrination of the Sumerian language scribal curriculum wholesale. Pardee & Glass 1984, 88, likewise opine that it was not the location of Mari so much as its inhabitants that ascertained the importance of the site to the histories of Syria and Palestine, which disregards the importance of the Euphrates as a means of transport and a passage between Southern Mesopotamia and the Levantine corridor, making Mari's location quite central. The city was also located at the dead centre of Babylon and Yamhad.

²⁸⁶ For a thorough examination of the poetics of Hebrew poetry, see Alonso Schökel 1988; Seybold 2003.

²⁸⁷ For more recent discussion on the nature of Biblical poetry, see J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (Baltimore: 1998) and J. P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: 2001).

Origins of West-Semitic Literary Composition (2012) and relevant bibliography. The function of word-pairs in Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry in particular was discussed by Gevirtz,²⁸⁸ who noted that the sequence of the words in parallel pairs is sometimes reversed or inverse in Hebrew as compared with Ugaritic. He listed standard parallel pairs, among which the sea and the river are included.

The parallelism of sea and river is the most significant poetic element examined in this study. The way parallel pairs function is that one half of a verse uses a word, the meaning of which is then repeated by a word in the other half of the verse by a word of similar, although never exactly the same, semantic content. This is the basic principle of ancient Semitic poetry. Thus, for example, Judge River is a repetition of the meaning of Prince Sea, adding a nuance to the interpretation of the first epithet. When seven strokes of lightning are followed by eight crashes of thunder, it creates a fuller image by the repetition of similar terms. In Hebrew, the word-pairs are often two and function in bicola, but in Ugaritic they are sometimes also found in tricola – although usually even in tricola it is only two words that are paired, building upon a key word in the first stanza.²⁸⁹

It is fortunate for modern research that ancient Semitic poetry functioned in this fashion, as the rather mechanical use of these pairs has allowed us to reconstruct texts where, for example, the Ugaritic tablets have been broken off and the texts partially destroyed. Knowing that the mention of a cup of silver is usually followed by a reference to a chalice of gold has made reconstruction of these fragmentary texts possible. The mechanical use of word-pairs and repetitions has also created semantic clusters that we can expect in certain types of texts, and it is the observance of such a cluster of words found in the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle that I have used in my examination of the texts of the HB in this study. This semantic cluster is explained in more detail in the section on method. While many of the same word-pairs are used in Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry, we must still be wary of assuming that there is a one-to-one correspondence between them.²⁹⁰

The Hebrew word most central to this thesis (יָם) appears 396 times in the Masoretic texts of the HB, with the meaning of either sea or lake or any large body of water, or West in the sense of the cardinal direction corresponding to the

²⁸⁸ Gevirtz 1961; 1963.

²⁸⁹ Nömmik 2012, 405, has argued that most tricola in Biblical poetry are of composite character and original balanced parallel tricola are found only rarely, usually in the genre of hymns.

²⁹⁰ Craigie 1981, 105–106.

Mediterranean Sea.²⁹¹ An etymological link between the Hebrew word and the Ugaritic word *ym* is well established, and while we cannot demonstrate the correspondence of their semantic domains with absolute certainty, we can be fairly confident that they do largely overlap, especially when paired with the river, at least inasmuch as any other word-pair within the family of Semitic languages.²⁹² It is not entirely clear whether the parallel names Sea and River known to us through the Ugaritic texts refer to one or two distinct gods, or whether a kind dualistic divinity was in question, examples of which are found in abundance in Ugarit. By far the most popular view holds that the “Prince Sea, Judge River” of Ugarit is one god that is referred to by two parallel names.²⁹³ The parallelism of these two natural phenomena is not limited to Semitic poetry, as the idea-pair features in the texts of many other cultures as well. But the fact that their parallelism is a common feature of ancient Semitic poetry allows us to examine their employment in texts using analytical and comparative methods.

There are 38 incidences of the word יָם in the Psalter, and many of these seem to have a mythological context. The word ‘sea’ is featured in Pss. 66:6, 68:23, 72:8, 74:13, 78:13, 80:11, 93:4, 136:13 (יָם); 139:9, 65:6 (יָמִים); 72:8 (יָמִים); 77:20, 89:26, 106:6, 106:9, 136:15 (בָּיִם); 106:22 (עַל־יָם); 8:9, 33:7, 78:53, 89:10, 95:5, 96:11, 98:7, 104:25, 107:23, 114:3,5, 146:6 (הַיָּם); 8:9, 24:2, 46:3, 65:8, 69:35 (יַמִּים); 78:27, 107:3 (יַמִּים); and 135:6 (בְּיַמִּים).²⁹⁴ It has also traditionally been read into Ps. 18:16, where many translations read the plural of “water” (מַיִם).²⁹⁵ While the word ‘sea’ is not featured in Psalm 29 (the so-called ‘Canaanite Psalm’), it has been the object of interest for several studies pertaining to traces of the Combat Myth in the HB.²⁹⁶ Ostensibly, there may be instances in which faulty word division would have vanished earlier mentions of the sea (or even the god Yamm) by conflating them with the plural masculine ending יָם-, but

²⁹¹ Klein 1987, 259; Brown-Driver-Briggs 2006, 410. HALOT 1995, 413–414. The word יָם was used both of the lakes Genesareth/Kinnereth and the Dead Sea, but it was also sometimes used of great rivers like the Euphrates.

²⁹² Gordon 1947, 441; Ringgren 1990, 38.

²⁹³ The parallelism of the epithets is prevalent in the Baal Cycle. E.g. KTU 1.2. III 20–21: *bbht.zbl.ym. bhkl.tpt.nhr*, “In the quarters of Prince Sea, in the palace of Judge River”.

²⁹⁴ The singular form has over three times as many occurrences as the plural form. Of the singular instances, most feature the article הַ. Psalm 106 has the most incidences within a single psalm, with four.

²⁹⁵ This is based on manuscript evidence as well as 2 Sam 22:16. Craigie 1983a, 170.

²⁹⁶ E.g. Craigie 1983b, 68–71. Ps. 29 has had a special position in the comparative studies of Hebrew and Ugaritic texts, having been the object of studies for over 70 years.

conducting a thorough analysis of all of the plural masculine endings in Hebrew poetry is unfeasible.²⁹⁷

Most of the references to the Combat Myth in the poetry of the Hebrew psalms seem to fall within the group of psalms outlined above, and most of the psalms mentioning the *Leitwort* “sea” do seem to bear some association with the myth. There are also texts outside the book of Psalms that have been categorized as psalm literature,²⁹⁸ e.g. Ex 15:1–21, Dt 32:1–44, 1 Sam 2:1–10, Is 5:1–9, Jon 2:3–10, and Hab 3:2–19, most of which bear some connection to the myth. It is no coincidence that all of the above-mentioned passages may yield verses relevant to the topic, as they are frequently named as some of the oldest portions of the HB. Mitchell submitted that in the Psalter, and one could assume the same for other instances of Biblical poetry, water symbolizes enemies.²⁹⁹ While I think it would be going too far to claim that all instances of water in Biblical poetry portray adversarial forces, perhaps the wide-spread belief of demonic forces inhabiting water courses on the eastern Mediterranean discussed by Canaan (1922) would allow us to interpret sources of water as suspicious, lending credence to the fact that the vast majority of the instances of these motifs in Biblical poetry do seem to portray bodies of water negatively.

In the following chapters I discuss the relevant Biblical passages in three categories: the first category is that of *cultic poetry*, texts that have been traditionally associated with the temple cult; the second category is *prophetic poetry*, poetic language used and employed in the prophetic books. While the first and second category sometimes utilize similar or even the same texts, their focus, context, and use are different, as the latter are using and embedding elements of the first. The third category is *mythopoetic texts*, mythic remnants employing

²⁹⁷ Psalm 9:13 is an example of a passage that could feature a later corrected mention of Yamm. The Kethib of the verse is זָכַר לֹא-שָׁכַח צָעֲקַת עֲנִיִּים, but the last word has a Qere form עֲנִיִּים. If the last word is read as ‘the poor’, as the Qere suggests, the inverse parallelism is imperfect ($a^{1+1} a^2 a^3 / -b^3 b^2 b^1$). In the first half of the verse, Yahweh remembers “them, the seekers of blood(s)”, i.e. enemies. The latter half of the verse presents an antithetical correspondence in Yahweh’s not-forgetting of “the cries of the poor”. However, were we to read the last word as עֲנִי, with עֲנִי as a construct state of עָנָה, a more stringent parallelism would emerge ($a^{1+1} a^2 a^3 / -b^3 b^2 b^{1+1}$). The verbal root has many meanings, which are in the semantic cluster of suffering, humiliation, toiling, and being downtrodden. The antithetical parallelism would work better were עֲנִי to correspond to the דָּמִים (or perhaps even an original דָּם). It also finds support at the end of the following verse 14, which finishes with the word מָוֶת, death or Mot. The parallelism of adversarial beings and a juxtaposition with the Storm-God’s other major enemy give reason to explore the possibility of the verse containing an allusion to Yamm.

²⁹⁸ Würthwein 1979, 89. They have been found as part of the book of Psalms at least until the 6th century CE.

²⁹⁹ Mitchell 1997, 119.

poetic vocabulary often embedded in prose narratives, which differentiates the texts from the Psalms and from the poetic fragments in Prophetic texts. My definition of mythopoetic text is a text that employs the mythological language of poetry in the context of prose narratives, but mythopoetic texts have also been defined as poetic texts that employ mythological themes and motifs.³⁰⁰

In contrast to the Ugaritic evidence, there are no works of epic poetry in the texts of the HB. But the poetic fragments of the last category may well be remnants of Hebrew poetry of this kind. In all of these categories, it may be possible to discern for the texts one of the three, often at least somewhat interconnected, sources of influence mentioned in the introduction: NWS mythology, Babylonian (or hybrid) mythology, and royal inscriptions. In addition, local traditions may sometimes be considered, especially in connection with the first group. The examples of Biblical poetry discussed in this work will be presented topically in connection with the ANE texts under discussion.

2.3.2 The Mechanisms of Parallelism

One of the most discernible features of NWS poetry is the so-called *parallelismus membrorum*, the parallelism of the members of a poetic verse.³⁰¹ In verses employing this kind of parallelism, which are normally arranged in bicola (or rarely in tricola), the informative content of the initial colon is repeated or elaborated in the second colon. The mechanical parallelism of the poetry means that there were words, staples of the poetic vocabulary sharing a closely related semantic field, that were frequently paired together, e.g. silver and gold or seven and eight, as mentioned in the previous section.³⁰²

The most frequent type of parallelism is of the type a^1 is to b^1 as a^2 is to b^2 (e.g. “strong hand and outstretched arm” in Ps. 136:12), which may be joined together by the use of a single predicate or a shared preposition. There were also

³⁰⁰ For the latter, see Smick 1982, although he defined mythopoetic as the “metaphoric or symbolic use of mythic images in artistic literary compositions”. In my definition poetry is poetry and texts that are employing poetic language are by definition not poetry, but texts employing poetic language.

³⁰¹ For recent discussions on the topic, see the volume edited by A. Wagner: *Parallelismus Membrorum* (2007), OBO 224.

³⁰² On *parallelismus membrorum*, see Berlin 1985; Craigie 1983a, 37; Curtis 1985, 109; Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 17; Loretz 1990, 44–48; 2002, 2–3; Segert 1999, 173; Mowinckel 2004; 166–169; on poetic parallelism and word-pairs in Hebrew poetry, see Schökel 1988, 48–63.

variations to the parallelism of ancient Semitic poetry, which could present itself in the form of *synonym parallelism*, meaning that the information of a line is repeated or expanded in an analogue metaphor on a second and possibly a third line (a^1 is to b^1 as a^2 is to b^2), in *antithetic parallelism*, in which a verse would be followed by its antonym (a is to b as $-a$ is to $-b$), or in *synthetic parallelism*, (a and b are elaborated by c). These kinds of parallels could also feature in a *chiasmus of the members* of the verses (a^1 is to b^1 as b^2 is to a^2). A special case of parallelism is the so-called *extended colon*, often used in tricola, in which one of the cola is shorter than the others, which then supply the information that the initial colon is missing, like a verb.³⁰³ Although tricola are found frequently in Ugaritic poetry, the use of tricola in Hebrew poetry is not usually a sign of the antiquity of the verses, but rather mark explanatory cola added to original bicola.³⁰⁴

The fundamentals of ancient Hebrew poetry have been reconsidered in recent research, and, for example, Nömmik came to the conclusion that parallelism on its own is not the defining characteristic of the ancient Hebrew verse. According to him, it is the *parallelism* found in *two colometrically balanced cola* that characterizes the ancient Hebrew poetic verse.³⁰⁵ Nömmik also displays agnosticism toward the traditional categories in the study of Hebrew poetry, and has the useful suggestion of replacing the category of synthetic parallelism with the designation of enjambment, which better describes verses where the second colon explains or motivates the initial colon.³⁰⁶ But it is not merely the stringent parallelism that allows mythic or epic poetry to preserve archaic elements. So Boedeker:

the special nature of epic language tends to preserve elements from much earlier periods. Epic is therefore a logical place to look for the oldest meanings and associations of a word.³⁰⁷

Sometimes there are doublets in the Biblical texts, and the existence of doublets is more easily found in Biblical poetry. Doublets are the repetition of a verse, nearly in the same textual form in close proximity to one another. These doublets occurred in the redaction process, when a scribe redacting or copying manuscripts would remember or encounter a variant reading to a verse, recording both variants

³⁰³ For a thorough explanation of the mechanics of Hebrew poetry, see Watson 1984.

³⁰⁴ Nömmik 2012, 405.

³⁰⁵ Nömmik 2012, 408.

³⁰⁶ Nömmik 2012, 406.

³⁰⁷ Boedeker 1974, 9. While the parallelism of oral poetry is stringent and formulaic, the way in which the different aspects are used and combined can be extremely flexible.

into the redacted text. With regard to Biblical poetry, it has been suggested that doublets occurred either due to graphic corruption or theologically motivated correction. Variants exist, e.g. in Ex 18:19, 1; Sam 28:19, 2; Sam 5:1, 3; Jer 2:17–18, 23:10; Pss. 56:11, 80:16, 18.³⁰⁸

There is a natural rhythm to poetry (*Poetics* 1448b:20), and this rhythm seems to have its own particular flow varying from culture to culture and language to language. It was suggested very early on, prominently by Albright, that the poetic rhythm between the Ugaritic and Hebrew texts was similar. Such a rhythm is often ingrained and internalized, and as the implement of rhythmic verse is not an entirely conscious effort on the part of the poet, the reality of poetic verse does not always match up with the theory of the same. It is when the poetry *feels* right to the audience that it is most likely to be continually transmitted. The rhythm of Hebrew poetry seems to be based on a fixed number of stresses on words, which Albright numbered in the 3+3, while the count of 4+4 has also been suggested, averaging 8–12 consonants per colon.³⁰⁹

The standard metre of Ugaritic poetry, which seems to have been based on a count of stressed syllables rather than mere syllables (and in long words there can be found two accents, or a secondary stress), bears similarity to archaic Hebrew poetry, and the metre that is used in these examples (Song of Deborah and David's lament of Jonathan are mentioned by Albright, as is the "epic and didactic metre" of Job and the Proverbs) is a regular alternating metre.³¹⁰ The study of Ugaritic metre is difficult because the syllabic lines are not always apparent, but it is important especially in the reconstruction of broken texts.

For the most part, I have steered clear of colometrically motivated reconstructions in this study, but in the case of the important and fragmentary text KTU 1.1 IV it has been necessary, as it is central both to the myth and to my thesis. For a thorough comparison of Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry and their metrics, the classic works of Pardee (1981) and Loretz & Kottsieper (1987) may be consulted.³¹¹ Suffice it to say that the similarities between the corpora go beyond shared iconic constellations and mythological vocabulary, which is what I

³⁰⁸ See Tov 1992, 241–243.

³⁰⁹ Albright 1932, 207: "Words and phrases may be interpolated and do not come under the sway of the standard metre, just as in Hebrew poetry". Nömmik 2012, 402.

³¹⁰ Albright (1932, 207) suggested that the middle lines of poetic tricola were "recited slowly and impressively".

³¹¹ On the technical side of Hebrew poetry and its strophics, metrics and verse structure, see Terrien (2003) and Mowinckel (2004).

will be concentrating on in this work. But I will not merely attempt to find similarities between the texts, as often times it is just as important to highlight the differences between two similar traditions.

2.3.3 The Problems with Biblical Poetry

2.3.3.1 The Dating of Hebrew Poetry

This section introduces the problems regarding the dating of the various poetic texts in the HB and how this affects their reliability as historical witnesses to the time they intend to portray. The problems with the dating of the texts of the HB are manifold, and they are compounded when it comes to the issue of the dating of poetic texts.³¹² The problems vary from poetic text to poetic text, often complicated by the fact that poetic units may be embedded in much later prosaic or narrative compositions and also by the trend or tendency of composing archaicising poetry at certain literary periods (archaicising poetry is a method of creating artificial authority for a text by using the symbolic language and linguistic tools of earlier texts).³¹³ What makes the examination of Hebrew, as well as Ugaritic, poetry difficult is that because thousands of years separate us from these texts, our understanding of the symbolism and semantics of the language(s) employed in the texts is limited.³¹⁴

Loretz, the foremost authority on the study of the psalms in the context of the Ugaritic texts, pointed out that the dating of Hebrew poetry has also always been dependent on the *prevailing paradigm* in psalm studies.³¹⁵ The prevailing trend in Biblical studies has been toward dating psalms to the Persian period or even later, and when it comes to their final redaction, this is more than likely true.³¹⁶ The dating of Hebrew poetry is notoriously difficult, the proposed dates for one single line of poetry sometimes encompassing the span of a thousand

³¹² Joosten 2012, 282, pointed out that the dating of poetry is especially difficult because “poets exploit a much wider range of expressions than is usual in prose”.

³¹³ Vern 2011, 64–65; Joosten 2005, 239. Joosten 2012 calls them “pseudoclassicisms”. By examining only the passages in texts that I intend to examine against the context of the Combat Myth I do not intend to claim different authorship for the passages from their framing textual materials, nor to suggest that the passages should be of an alternate dating, merely that the motif under investigation is found in these particular passages.

³¹⁴ De Langhe 1958, 128.

³¹⁵ Loretz 1990, 51–51.

³¹⁶ See e.g. Nömmik 2012 for recent trends in the study of ancient Hebrew poetry.

years, ranging from the LBA to the Persian and early Hellenistic period.³¹⁷ The dating of Hebrew poetry is an on-going discussion, and even some of the premises for the interpretation of poetic texts as ‘ancient’ or whether linguistic characteristics can be used to date texts at all have been called into question.³¹⁸ Pat-El & Wilson-Wright go so far as to claim that the debate over the linguistic dating of Hebrew poetry is at an impasse,³¹⁹ while Joosten believes that a synthetic method that takes into consideration both the chronological and the dialectological approaches is needed.³²⁰

While it may be possible to detect features of archaic Biblical Hebrew (ABH) through the use of certain lexemes, morphological forms, and syntactic constructions,³²¹ demonstrating the antiquity of the texts (or even the relative chronology of the Biblical witnesses) containing references to the Combat Myth has not been my objective in this study.³²² The examples used range from what may be examples of genuine ABH (especially Ex. 15) to late texts conventionally dated to the Persian period.³²³ And finding traces of the Combat Myth in texts of the Persian period is not surprising due to the persistence and plasticity of the tradition. Müller has argued that the “imagery of the kingly weather-god” especially was still familiar to the authors of the texts in the Persian period, being an important aspect of “the human conception of the divine”.³²⁴

Each Biblical text, whether representing poetry or other textual forms, also

³¹⁷ See e.g. the essays in A. Albertz & B. Becking’s *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian period*. (Assen: 2003). The formation of the canon of the Hebrew texts as such is of little consequence to this thesis, so long as the position that older traditions were incorporated into the later texts is accepted. The “rush to late-dating” tendency and its “ideological underpinnings” in Biblical studies have been criticized, e.g. by Rendsburg 2003, 107–109 and Joosten 2005, 328.

³¹⁸ See Bloch 2009 and bibliography for discussion (on Ex 15 and Ps. 18/2 Sam 22 especially). Vern 2011, 14–16, is of the opinion that it is impossible to use linguistic features to date texts of the Hebrew Bible.

³¹⁹ Pat-El & Wilson-Wright 2013, 410.

³²⁰ Joosten 2013a, 117–118.

³²¹ Joosten 2005, 329, pointed out that it may be easier to use syntax than lexemes to date texts because the changes are less perceptible to users and therefore suffer less conscious alteration (whereas a writer may choose archaic vocabulary to make his text sound old on purpose). I concede the point, but as I have not attempted to date the texts under discussion, a focus on the lexemes is warranted. Also Joosten 2013b, 351–352.

³²² For discussion on ABH the works of Notarius 2012, 2013, as well as her 2007 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem PhD thesis *The System of Verbal Tenses in Archaic and Classical Biblical Poetry*. Note that ABH is the name for a convergence of unusual stylistic elements that does not necessitate that the texts are genuinely archaic. The other styles are called Classical (or Standard) Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew.

³²³ Often based on Aramaisms, although not all Aramaisms can be used to date texts to the Persian period. Rendsburg 2003, 104. There is nothing to suggest that a part of traditions could not have been transmitted by the Arameans who were among the recipients of the Aleppan traditions, just as these linguistic features were transmitted.

³²⁴ Müller 2014, 275.

faces different, and various, problems when it comes to their dating. Most of the ANE text materials have a necessary *ante quem* date, while the HB texts do not. With regard to this study, I am working with the hypothesis that the poetic material of the HB often contains archaic elements, sometimes purposefully invoking archaicising language, even though the *final forms* of the compositions may oftentimes be dated as late as the Persian and Hellenistic periods. Further than that, I have chosen not to engage with the question of dating with any precision with regard to individual psalms or psalm passages.³²⁵ The poetic material of the HB presents us with examples of poetry from various temporal contexts and timeframes, and engaging with sociolinguistics or questions of dialect geography must fall outside the scope of the thesis.³²⁶

While such questions are doubtless important, they are of limited use with the diachronic triangulating approach to the *transmission of traditions* – rather than texts or works – in this study. Within the context of this study, it is sufficient to have information on the broad relative sequence of the texts (a minimum of half a millennium separates the Mari texts from the Ugaritic texts and the Ugaritic texts from the Biblical texts) regarding both literary and linguistic features, but the specific historical contexts of the texts are largely irrelevant. The literary history of the various books of the HB has been discussed recently by Schmid (2012), whose discussion may be consulted. On the questions and current approaches to the dating of the texts of the HB, the two-volume handbook *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems* by I. Young & R. Rezetko with M. Ehrensverd (2009) may be consulted.³²⁷

While the archaicising tendency sometimes makes the assertion of the archaic core of the poetic texts of the HB difficult to maintain, it is in the similarities of Biblical poetry to older examples of NWS poetry, such as we find in the Ugaritic texts, that allows us to deduce that the poetry of the HB must have developed from a literature similar to these examples of Bronze Age NWS literature, of which the Amarna texts are another example. While recreating Early Iron Age Hebrew poetry on the basis of the much later and heavily edited and

³²⁵ Note, however, that the approach is not to be confused with the kind of synchronic approach where all texts are treated as though they were of the same age.

³²⁶ For such questions, the works of Young & Rezetko and Vern may be consulted.

³²⁷ For an opposing view on the possibility of using linguistic features to date HB texts, see A. Hurvitz in *The Recent Debate on Late Biblical Hebrew: Solid Data, Experts' Opinions, and Inconclusive Arguments* (HS 47: 2006), 191–210; and Pat-El & Wilson-Wright 2013, according to whom they represent the minority opinion (p. 390). Similar opinions to Young & Rezetko can be found, e.g. in Vern 2011.

redacted poetic texts that we have in the HB may be impossible, it is from the common features of the poetry of the HB and the poetry of Ugarit that we may be able to ‘triangulate’ what Early Iron Age poetry in the area of Palestine may have contained. While it is also true that the Ugaritic texts are not a primary source “for the religious history of Canaan and Israel”,³²⁸ the Ugaritic texts have been invaluable in the study of ancient Hebrew poetry because there is indication that terms existed that were archaic and incomprehensible already to the translators of the Septuagint, the meaning of which only the discovery of the Ugaritic texts has allowed us to ascertain.³²⁹

It could be argued that ignoring the contextual framework of the passages is to reject their historical setting to the loss of crucial information, and this is true. But the contexts in which the traditions were later used, and their origins and pre-histories are two different questions, and it is the latter that are the focus of my inquiry.³³⁰ The former, in which some of the information regarding the symbols and metaphors used may have been lost along the way, may witness to a process of the democratization of texts. Bonnet & Merlo discussed a similar process of democratization in connection with the transference of the prophetic oracles once addressed to the king onto the people of Israel in later traditions.³³¹ When texts were no longer produced, traded, and read by a palatial scribal elite, some of the more impressive themes and motifs entered popular culture and became staples of vulgar narratives in which only the thinnest veneer of the original monarchic character of the stories may have remained.

2.3.3.2 The Oral Transmission of Poetic Units

This section focuses on the topics of the oral transmission of poetry: the way in which it differs from literary poetry and how it may contain and preserve poetic units of considerable length that may have originated up to hundreds of years earlier than the time in which they were first recorded in written form. It is my

³²⁸ Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 396.

³²⁹ Craigie 1983a, 33.

³³⁰ Also true in the inverse, as outlined by Tugendhaft 2013, 194: “Because meaning is not present intrinsically in a mythological motif but, rather, results from the way that a motif is employed in a specific context, concern with origins can prove to be an obstacle to understanding. Knowing where something comes from is not the same as understanding what it is doing once it is there”.

³³¹ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 86.

intention to discuss the problems presented by the oral transmission of poetry prior to its redaction into textual forms, but also the possibility of penetrating further into (pre-)history than extant written textual records allow, especially in the context of ancient Israel. Gunkel was among the first scholars to recognize the importance of considering oral sources of mythology in tandem with the written sources passed down to us, becoming one of the important pioneers of the so-called ‘tradition history’ (*Überlieferungsgeschichte*) of the form-critical school of thought.³³²

There are very few texts from the area of Palestine that are securely dated to the Early Iron Age – the foremost among them the Gezer Calendar. Usually these texts are very short and do not give us much insight into the poetry of the era. And yet we can deduce from earlier NWS literatures, some features of which are repeated in much later Hebrew literature, that poetry of a kind must have existed in the area during this period, even though the epigraphic evidence for it is lacking. Stieglitz identified four primary sources for the study of the NWS cultures and the intellectual background of the HB: the HB itself (especially Prophetic literature, which according to him provides “eye-witness accounts of Canaanite cultic practices in the Iron Age and later”), Phoenician and Punic monuments, the Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos, and the texts from Ugarit. To this list he added the Ebla archives, which offer textual witnesses to the same cultural sphere a millennium earlier than the Ugaritic texts.³³³

The kind of poetry that antecedes the poetry we find in written form in the HB was not conveyed in writing, but was passed on orally (in rhythmic speech or in song) from one generation to the next.³³⁴ Much of the poetry of the Early Iron Age period must have been orally transmitted – not only because of the lack of written witnesses, but because the nature of poetry lends itself well to oral transmission. Indeed the whole concept of arranging ideas and concepts into poetic couplets and rhymes seems to have its origins in the oral transmission of literatures, and may therefore predate the invention of writing. In some cases, it may even be possible to extract features of orally transmitted poetry from later written works. There are certain features that enable us to differentiate between

³³² Gunkel 2006^[1895], 91. See also Peter Machinist’s foreword, pp. xv–xx.

³³³ Stieglitz 1990, 79.

³³⁴ Craigie 1983a, 26; Alonso Schökel 1988, 11; Mowinkel 2004, 133. Loretz 1990, 45, also pointed out that poetry could be conveyed via song and in written format at the same time. The poetry of the psalms probably continued to be sung even after it had been committed into writing, and in fact, is still sung in services all around the world.

literary poetry and poetry that, at the very least, most likely had oral antecedents.³³⁵ Poetry was not an individual endeavour, but a *social* one – an endeavour tightly connected to cult and religion.³³⁶ It is probable that most of the poetic material that has been preserved to us in literary form was originally passed on in a form that was not only oral, but a frequently repeated *public* form, in ritual and liturgical usage. In cultic use, the psalms were both orated and performed at the same time; the words and the acts belonging together.³³⁷

While psalms were generally considered a form of communal lament or “public wailing”, there are indications that in the Sumero-Babylonian cultural sphere it was sometimes the ritual duty of the king to sing a psalm (*šigû*) as a representative of the people on certain days of the month. It is possible that the Sumero-Babylonian traditions influenced the Hebrew psalms to some extent, as the origins of the Hebrew Sabbath are also, according to Langdon, historically and philologically in the Sumero-Babylonian culture. It bears repeating that psalm literature as such is not known from NWS sources outside of the HB, although this does not preclude older NWS themes and motifs from being used in psalm literature. According to Langdon, the Babylonian periods of penance ‘naturally’ influenced the religious services of other peoples.³³⁸ Psalms do have a close connection to kingship – especially the so-called kingship and enthronement psalms.³³⁹

Sallaberger, writing on Sumerian hymns, submitted that the hymns cannot be expected to give “literal descriptions of ritual actions”, as that is not the purpose of the texts. But the “religiously determined cosmic order” is symbolically represented by the texts, and was performed both in speech and action of the cultic rites. He asserted that “we do not know what the symbolic actions of rites looked like, but we do know the meaningful background ascribed to them: this is the divine world present in the texts”.³⁴⁰ The relationship of the

³³⁵ The so-called alphabetic psalms are an example of fundamentally literary poetry in the HB. See Freedman 1980, 51–77. None of the literary psalms, being psalms that require no oral pre-history, mention the sea or refer to the Combat Myth.

³³⁶ Mowinckel 2004, 12–14, 27; Rodd 2001, 357.

³³⁷ Craigie 1983a, 27; Loretz 1990, 107; Mowinckel 2004, 2–8; 20–22. Rodd (2001, 350), however, pointed out that there is not enough evidence to reconstruct the original historical context of the psalms.

³³⁸ Langdon 1909, xxii–xxiii.

³³⁹ The relationship of the enthronement psalms and Ugaritic texts has been discussed by Loretz 1979, 483–492.

³⁴⁰ Sallaberger 2005, 98. Also Edelman 2012, 161, “Through its symbols, which make up its content, ritual grounds common interests in an understanding of the hegemonic order”.

psalms to the posited cultic acts is not dissimilar. The question of the public performance of the psalms and other instances of Biblical poetry is not irrelevant to their understanding. Public rituals influence the political life of societies, play a role in the activities of governments, and affect the behaviour and attitudes of leaders, supporters, and the opponents of regimes alike.³⁴¹ In a new take on the old question, Edelman connected the major Judahite pilgrimage festivals of *pesah/massot* to the Akītu festival in Babylon:

By using the same mythic complex that underlay the Akitu festival to the god Marduk and celebrating the Jewish festival in the same month as the Akitu in Babylonia -- a pilgrimage to Jerusalem could remove Jews there from participation in a rival activity while strengthening their Jewish identity and generating income for the temple -- At the same time, those who opted not to make the pilgrimage would be reminded that they had their own religious festival that defined who they were so they should not identify with those celebrating Marduk's kingship.³⁴²

While the physical demonstrations of the concept are not relevant to my thesis, this is essentially the underlying ideological context that I propose for the Hebrew texts. I will discuss her reinterpretative framework in chapter 6.4.1.

Psalms have been connected especially to the character of King David, who was believed to have authored several of them. There are several psalms that begin with the appellation “לְדָוִד”, which has been understood in the sense of ‘written by’. Ugaritic evidence has suggested that a construction such as this may also have the meaning of ‘concerning X’, e.g. in the case of ‘*lkrt*’ signifying tablets that belong to the Keret narrative (KTU 1.14–1.16). Therefore the appellation “לְדָוִד” does not necessitate that the psalms were written by David or even written of David, but that they had been grouped together with the theme of ‘David’ (or even the theme of ‘the Beloved’, which I discuss subsequently).³⁴³ If David was a royal epithet, as I have speculated elsewhere in this study, then grouping royal psalms with this appellation makes sense. According to 1 Kgs 4:29–34, Solomon was also believed to have authored over a thousand songs, which has sometimes been taken as an indication that at least some of the Psalms could have been authored by him. But because of this intimate connection between the king and Hebrew psalm literature, the figure of the king is sometimes

³⁴¹ Porter 2005, 1. Foucault 1982, 790: “The relationship proper to power would not, therefore, be sought on the side of violence or of struggle, nor on that of voluntary linking (all of which can, at best, only be the instruments of power), but rather in the area of the singular mode of action, neither warlike nor juridical, which is government”. I agree that violence itself is not exercise of power. It is the threat of violence that brings power relations into being. The threat of violence legitimizes power relations.

³⁴² Edelman 2012, 192. In the Babylonian context, Nielsen (2012, 19) likewise remarks that it is the regular celebration of festivals through which cultural memory is perpetuated in societies.

³⁴³ See also Töyräänvuori 2015.

present in the psalms even when he is not *explicitly* mentioned, and it is only natural that vocabulary associated with the king would have found its way into the psalms.

After the poetry of the psalms had been committed into writing, it must be noted that their form was consciously redacted, and while many of them still employ techniques of oral poetry, their written format has also left its mark on the final product. The hand of an individual poet may also sometimes be visible in the psalms.³⁴⁴ The oral transmission of poetry as such is, however, not the focus of this study, and for further discussion, the work of Niditch (1996) may be consulted. While it is likely that alternative versions of orally transmitted poems must have circulated, and that these oral verses may have changed and transformed over time, public poetry is also by its very nature *conservative*. The more familiar an audience is with the verses, the less alternation and alteration they allow from the accustomed form. And even though changes may have occurred over the years, it does not mean that the themes and motifs of the poems and songs could not have retained their essence, their enduring core.³⁴⁵ Loretz correctly cautions the scholar that the association of non-Israelite myths with Israelite psalms is fraught with uncertainty.³⁴⁶ Regarding the Combat Myth, however, he fails to take into consideration the likelihood of native forms of the myth having circulated in the area.

Malamat held that at the late stage of their composition, the metaphors of the Biblical passages referencing the Combat Myth, which dealt with raging waters, were viewed as referring to “cosmic forces”. He also deemed it logical that even at their late stage, the texts ultimately reflect the divine nature of the Mediterranean.³⁴⁷ While it is extremely difficult and somewhat hazardous to venture guesses as to how the Biblical authors *intended* and how the redactors *understood* these verses (or whether indeed the inhabitants of Palestine ever viewed the Mediterranean Sea as a divinity), the earlier comparative materials from Ugarit and Mari allow us to conclude that the Biblical passages had already been somewhat removed from their purported earlier monarchic context.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Rodd 2001, 358. De Langhe 1958, 131–132. Mowinckel (2004, 126) believed that the psalms were tightly bound in tradition but also capable of containing a personal element.

³⁴⁵ Craigie 1983a, 27.

³⁴⁶ Loretz 1994, 281–282.

³⁴⁷ Malamat 1998, 31.

³⁴⁸ Batto (2013, 231) correctly pointed out that whether a reference to the combat myth is in a pre- or post-exilic HB text is not an argument for or against it being a reference to the combat myth,

Poetry, as a genre, seems to allow both the text itself to remain unchanged for vast periods of time while at the same time allowing its content and meaning to be reinterpreted by recipients with the altering and changing of contexts. This allows for a ‘multiplicity (or plurality) of answers’ regarding the interpretation of ancient Hebrew poetry, a device that Frankfort used in the interpretation ancient Egyptian thought,³⁴⁹ which is a concept I will return to in many portions of this study.

2.3.3.3 The Masoretic Text and Its Interpretation

This section briefly discusses the problems of working with the Masoretic text and what other textual sources can be used in concert with the Masoretic text to create the most reliable and the oldest or most ‘original’ (with interest not in the theologically purest text, but one that goes furthest back in time) Biblical text possible for the purposes of this study. It contains the caveats to bear in mind when using the Masoretic text as a source text in terms of textual transmission, the reliability of the extant text, source criticism, dating of texts and textual layers, as well as the issues of vocalization and word division.³⁵⁰

P. C. Craigie submitted that the comparative studies between Ugaritic and Biblical texts, especially with regard to the psalms, should focus on the unvocalized text of the HB, since the vocalized text is much later than the consonant text.³⁵¹ The Tiberian vocalization of the text, which is the basis of the vocalization of the Biblia Hebraica today, was devised in the Jewish community of the town of Tiberias between the 8th and 10th centuries CE, while the Babylonian and Palestinian systems, which later fell out of use, were devised during the 7th century.³⁵² The unvocalized Hebrew text reached its final form sporadically, but is believed to have been completed for all the books at least by the 3rd century CE. And several books, such as the books of the Torah, must have

a position with which one can only heartily agree. Conversely, the existence of a reference to the myth in a HB text is not an argument for the antiquity of the text.

³⁴⁹ Frankfort 1948, 19–20. Sasson 2008, 490, suggested that a similar tendency was prevalent among the ancient Mesopotamians, who were “tolerant of multiple expositions for the same phenomenon”.

³⁵⁰ In fact, even the line division of Biblical psalms was not set until after the first century CE. Some of the Qumran psalms corresponding to the Masoretic psalms have been arranged stichometrically while others are written continuously (or in “prose-format” in Flint’s terms). Flint 1998, 455.

³⁵¹ Craigie 1983a, 51–52.

³⁵² See Yeivin 1980.

reached their final form several centuries earlier.³⁵³

The texts discovered in the Qumran caves by the Dead Sea between the years 1946–1956 have, however, given indications that there was some variation in at least some of the texts until the end of the first century CE.³⁵⁴ Psalms manuscripts were numerous among the Scrolls, and most of the Masoretic psalms can be found among the manuscripts.³⁵⁵ The texts from Qumran also indicate that the word division was not final until after the first century, as some of the Qumran texts are written in *scriptio continua* and without word dividers, and some in a mixture of the continued script and separated words. The vocalized text divided into separate words, then, is a considerably later interpretation of the unvocalized text, and later still is the stichometric arrangement of Biblical poetry.³⁵⁶

The Qumran psalms may also witness to the redaction of the psalms having been a very long process,³⁵⁷ and that variant editions of the Psalter existed for a long time.³⁵⁸ That the redaction of the Psalter was done in stages (as opposed to gradually) is also witnessed by the Qumran psalm texts. The textual forms of Pss. 1–89 had been ‘stabilized’ (i.e., are found in a form corresponding to their Masoretic counterparts) by the first century BCE, while Psalms from 90 onwards were still ‘fluid’ in composition and arrangement *vis-à-vis* their Masoretic correspondents.³⁵⁹ It has been theorized that the latter psalms would have developed independently after the split of the communities, and evidencing that no ‘closed’ composition of the Psalter existed in the first century CE. In fact,

³⁵³ See McDonald & Sanders 2002.

³⁵⁴ See Davies, Brooke & Callaway 2002. The psalms alone contain “hundreds of variant readings that can extend from single words to entire verses” according to Flint 1998, 457. He continues: “several are significant for our understanding of the texts of the Psalter”.

The psalms found at Qumran (esp. in the Large Psalms Scroll, 11Q5 or 11QPs^a, but there at least forty different fragments and manuscripts of psalms), witness that psalm texts were copied long before the establishing of the text of the Masoretic tradition, and that there were different versions of texts in circulation. The copying process itself may also have left errors in the text, irrespective of the redaction process. Rodd 2001, 356; Mowinckel 2004, 120–122.

³⁵⁵ Flint 1998, 471. 126 out of the 150 Masoretic psalms are attested at least in part.

³⁵⁶ Flint 1998, 463, on the subject of the psalms: “The practice of many scholars to presume that all Biblical scrolls originally contained the order found in the Masoretic Text unless otherwise proven is both misleading and unscientific”. Nömmik 2012, 404, also raised the issue of how the writing of Hebrew poetry originally in *scriptio continua* may have affected the technical construction of Hebrew verse.

³⁵⁷ Although not necessarily an arbitrary one. See Walton 1991, according to whom the psalms were chosen and arranged to form a poetic narrative on Davidic kingship.

³⁵⁸ Flint 1998, 464. Qumran psalms that have been dated to the first century CE still evidence points of divergence with the Masoretic psalms. In addition to the 126 at least partially preserved Masoretic psalms from Qumran, there are also 15 ‘apocryphal’ psalm texts, i.e. non-Biblical psalms, found in four manuscripts, of which nine were wholly unknown until the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls. For details, see Flint 1998, 455.

³⁵⁹ Walton 1991, 22. According to him, “books 4–5” displayed a “higher degree of variability” up until the first century CE.

different editions of the Psalter are attested.³⁶⁰

It must also be born in mind that while we have manuscript evidence in the Qumran texts dating to the 2nd or 3rd century BCE,³⁶¹ the oldest manuscript containing Masoretic text has been dated to the 9th century CE,³⁶² and the oldest complete manuscript of the Masoretic texts, Codex Leningradensis, used as the basis of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, is dated to the beginning of the 11th century. There are some sources containing texts that we find in the HB, such as P.Nash (dated to the 2nd century BCE),³⁶³ but these manuscripts are short and fragmentary. Of the oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint, P.Rylands 458 dates to the 2nd century BCE and P.Fouad 266 to the 1st century, both containing fragments only.³⁶⁴ The oldest of the great uncial codices (*Vaticanus*), containing originally the complete text of the Greek Old Testament, is dated to the 4th century CE.³⁶⁵ With regard to the many poetic texts of the HB, there is then not only a measure of distance between the composition of a text and its Biblical redaction, but there is also a distance between a supposed final redaction of a text and the text copy that has survived to us. All of these factors complicate our study of the texts.

It must, however, be stressed that the Masoretic text is not an uninformed interpretation, but is based on scribal and scholarly traditions passed on from one generation to the next. While it is far removed from the hypothetical early Iron Age pre-literary traditions that this study is concerned with, and while it is presumed that some mistakes and erroneous interpretations must have been admitted into the Masoretic text, it is still a valid interpretation of the text, a legitimate tradition carried over – albeit one tradition among many. Therefore the Masoretic text can be used, in accordance with the other sources, in deriving the meaning and performing the exegesis of individual passages.

The Masoretic text should, however, not be given a special authoritative position, at least compared with sources such as the Septuagint and the Qumran texts. We should not compare ‘other’ witnesses *against* the Masoretic text, but compare various ancient witnesses *with* one another, which is where the approach

³⁶⁰ On the theses of the Qumran Psalms Hypothesis, see Flint 1998, 459ff.

³⁶¹ Abegg 2010, 49–51. Flint 1998, 453, for example, calls the scrolls “our earliest witnesses to the text of the Scripture”. The scrolls have been dated, e.g. using radiocarbon dating and palaeography. According to Flint 1998, 456, most of the psalm texts from Qumran date from the 1st century BCE, while the oldest (4QPs^a+^w) are from the 2nd century BCE.

³⁶² Kahle 1959², 91.

³⁶³ See Reif 1997.

³⁶⁴ Würthwein 1979, 188–190.

³⁶⁵ Würthwein 1979, 74.

of textual triangulation may prove useful. Craigie in fact stated that the Ugaritic texts are also on par with the vocalized text of the HB when it comes to the interpretation of the unvocalized text.³⁶⁶ It is only through the comparison and contrasting of the sources available to us that we can reach the best forms of individual texts, allowing us to speculate on the meaning inherent in the texts for the various communities that used them, even if the communities that originated them remain out of our reach.

One of the major issues that the uncertainty of the vocalization of the Masoretic text causes is that, as we do not know precisely how the words were pronounced, it makes the examination of the metrics of Hebrew poetry extremely difficult. The same is of course true of the Ugaritic texts, compounding the problem. Mowinckel submitted that languages have a natural, spontaneous rhythm, from which poetry originates. While there are few indications of the natural rhythm in the textual sources, one could posit that as closely related languages, the natural rhythm of Ugaritic and Hebrew would be somewhat similar.³⁶⁷ Metrics, or prosody – how poetic verse structures are divided into rhythmic units of meaning – is important in the understanding of the texts. With these caveats in mind, the diplomatic editions of the texts of the HB, BHS and the on-coming Biblia Hebraica Quinta, are convenient for the purposes of notation in scholarly works, which is why I have chosen to use the BHS as the basis for commentary on the Biblical texts in this work.³⁶⁸ For a comprehensive study on the problems of textual criticism with regard to the poetic (and other) texts in the HB, the work of E. Tov (1992) may be consulted.

2.3.3.4 Using Poetic Texts in Historical-Critical Research

This section contains an introduction on the use of poetic texts in historical-critical and historiographic research. This chapter also contains an introduction to why ancient prophetic texts often employ poetic vocabulary and sometimes contain actual poetic units as prophetic oracles. The political aspects of the

³⁶⁶ Craigie 1983a, 51–52.

³⁶⁷ Freedman 1980, 51–77; Pardee 1981, 134, 137; Craigie 1983a, 37–38; Mowinckel 2004, 157–175.

³⁶⁸ Note also that a critical edition of the texts of the HB is being compiled in the form of the Oxford Hebrew Bible. While the critical edition has some caveats of its own, it may still be preferable to the diplomatic editions in future scholarly discussions.

prophetic institution in the ANE are also briefly discussed. Freedman, entertaining the possibility that it would be possible to access history through ancient poetry, stated that “the early poetry of Israel constitutes a prime source for the reconstruction of Israel’s history”.³⁶⁹ According to Aristotle (*Poetics* 1451b:1), poetry was more “scientific” than history because it contained general truths whereas history concerned itself with particular facts. While it is not my intention to attempt to garner particular facts from ancient poetics texts, they may still be used for historical-critical research.³⁷⁰

The poetry contained in the psalms lends itself to the comparative study of Ugaritic and Hebrew literature better than almost any other body of literature in the HB, due to their many shared characteristics. The book of Psalms is the largest collection of ancient Hebrew poetry at our disposal today, even though the book itself may not have reached its final form until the first centuries CE. Loretz has also pointed out that during the canonization process of the book of Psalms, the poetry that was chosen for the collection was elitist, supportive of the ruling ideology and the prevailing hegemony, which serves to add its own complications for the study of the history of psalm literature,³⁷¹ but which may aid in the study of ideology. The book of Psalms, it must be noted, in its heavily redacted form, also does not represent the oldest layer of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament. The oldest poetry in the HB can be found in the Song of the Sea (Ex 15:1–18), the Song of the Ark (Num 10:35–36), Baalam’s oracles (Num 23–24), the Song of Moses (Dt 32), the Blessing of Moses (Dt 33), the Song of Deborah (Jdgs 5), the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10), and possibly the Song of the Well (Num 21:17–18) and the Song of Hesbon (Num 21:17–30).³⁷²

While I agree that it is possible to access historical realities through poetry, I must amend this statement by pointing out that the Hebrew poetry of the Old

³⁶⁹ Freedman 1980, 167–178.

³⁷⁰ See Joosten 2005, 327–328, for a brief history of the Historical-Critical approach to the study of the texts of the HB. For discussion on the theology of the psalms, see Spieckermann 1989 and literature from p. 293. The discussion in his book, although a classic, is somewhat outdated, but a valiant effort to find the common themes in some of the ostensibly oldest psalms in the Psalter.

³⁷¹ Loretz 1990, 51. Flint 1998, 464, also discussed “secondary collections” of psalms, the existence of which is hinted at by the Qumran evidence. These secondary collections would have been compositions in which selected texts from ‘fixed’ arrangements of Biblical texts – not only psalm texts – would have been rearranged for secondary purposes.

³⁷² Craigie 1983a, 25. The more recent discussion of Pat-El & Wilson-Wright 2013, 400, offer Gen 49, Ex. 15, Num. 23–24, Dt. 32–33, Jdg 5, 2 Sam. 22, Pss. 18 and 68 as containing the oldest texts in the HB. They do not attempt to date the texts with precision but conclude that they contain features earlier than the rest of the Biblical texts. Notarius 2012 has a similar selection, excluding the psalms.

Testament cannot be construed as a prime (or primary) source because we do not possess a single poetic verse written on materials that could be physically dated to Pre-Exilic times. The poetry of the HB can only be considered a prime source in the sense of ‘the best available’, archaeological evidence notwithstanding, but as an ancient textual source, it is secondary – unlike the Mariote and Ugaritic texts.³⁷³ And more to the point, it is unreliable and notoriously difficult to interpret. But there is still enough cause to assert that it is possible, through poetry, to reach some of the oldest mythological traditions of the society that created, originated, traded, and passed on these texts. The mythological traditions in poetic texts have often been preserved in a less edited and redacted form than in prosaic texts.³⁷⁴

There are several mythical motifs familiar from the Ugaritic texts that can perhaps be located in the prosaic texts of the HB, but they have undergone linguistic and literary development and change. The poetry of the cultic songs, however, may have retained their form unchanged throughout the years, or at least longer than the prosaic texts.³⁷⁵ Loretz, however, submitted that the psalms reached their final form in a post-cultic era, meaning perhaps that the redaction of the psalms was completed at a time when they were no longer in use by the temple cult.³⁷⁶ One must point out, however, that the texts of the psalms are still in cultic use today all over the globe, and that there probably is not a time in their history when they have not been in some kind of cultic use.

Poetry has an important place among the texts of the HB, which is testament to the importance of poetic expression in the formation of historical self-understanding in the area of Palestine.³⁷⁷ Ancient Israel is not unique in this regard. In most cultures, poetry presents us with some of the oldest literature, often even preceding written literature. With the myriad different literatures at our disposal today, it is perhaps difficult to conceive of poetry as not merely a creative, artistic endeavour, but a necessary format for the preservation of one’s traditions, culture, history, and literature in pre- and semi-literate societies. Poetry

³⁷³ For discussion on the archaeological sources of ancient Palestine, see e.g. Weippert 1988, Keel & Uehlinger 1992.

³⁷⁴ Joosten 2012, 281, pointed out that the Pre-exilic texts of the HB “have been edited, supplement, or partially rewritten in later times”.

³⁷⁵ Widengren 1958, 158–169; Alonso Schökel 1988, 17; Loretz 1990, 43.

³⁷⁶ Loretz 1990, 51. Gottlieb (1980, 62) believed that the psalms had been written specifically for the use of the temple cult. Mowinkel (2004, 4), however, pointed out that the cultic use of poetry does not necessitate a cultic origin for it.

³⁷⁷ Loretz 1990, 43.

and poetic expression have been used by many different cultures as a seemingly natural channel for the formation of human thought and sentiment into a more permanent body, a form that is mnemotechnically easier to convey and to preserve.

What separates poetic language from spoken language and prosaic texts is its form, and this is true for poetry in all cultures.³⁷⁸ Often poetry is also less straightforward than prosaic text, and the interpretation of its meaning more ambiguous (*Poetics* 1448). It is the conviction of the author that it is yet possible to discern historical information from poetic mythological texts concerning the cultures that created and used these texts, and that through the poetic texts of the HB we are also able to discern information of shared ancient Semitic traditions from which they sprung. G. Widengren, for example, believed that the Ugaritic texts prove that the myths of the Storm-God's battle with the sea were known throughout "Canaan", and that the Israelites had adopted them from the inhabitants thereof. According to him, in the motif of the battle against the "dragon" we find "the most striking" parallel between the myths of Ugarit and ancient Israel.³⁷⁹ Similarly, Avishur described Hebrew and Ugaritic literatures as two branches of one and the same Canaanite literature.³⁸⁰

The relationship between prophecy and the transmission of poetry is also a question that goes back into the early years of psalm research. Mowinckel viewed much of Biblical poetry in light of prophetic cultic activity, whereas Gunkel favoured the idea of spontaneous prophetic activity, denying a sort of political agenda to cultic liturgy.³⁸¹ In light of the letters from Mari, it would seem that a political agenda coloured prophetic activity through and through. But knowing that prophetic activity was a part of ancient Semitic court intrigue does not help us ascertain the extent to which the cultic poetry of the HB originated in the prophetic circles of the royal court.

The question of spontaneous prophetic activity is outside the scope of this dissertation (the works of Nissinen 2000, 2003a, 2003b may be consulted), and while public prophetic performance may have been one of the major vessels for the transmission of these traditions, scant evidence of the phenomenon remains. What is of concern to the author is the trading of prophetic texts, especially

³⁷⁸ Craigie 1983a, 36; Mowinckel 2004, 25–27.

³⁷⁹ Widengren 1958, 172–173.

³⁸⁰ Avishur 1994, 8.

³⁸¹ See Mowinckel 1922; 1923; 1924; Gunkel 1933.

poetry, as a *literary activity*, and this phenomenon seems to have had a clear and undeniable political agenda throughout the ANE.³⁸² One of the primary examples of political propaganda transmitted in prophetic parlance seems to have been the Combat Myth, as evidenced by the Biblical texts and the letters of Mari. The Ugaritic epic and the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions however evidence that prophetic activity was by far not the only vessel for the transmission and the continuation of this tradition.

In addition to his ground-breaking work on the Combat Myth, another one of Gunkel's innovations in Psalm research deserves consideration, namely that of the genre or *Gattung* of the psalms. He classified the psalms into four basic types – hymns, communal laments, individual laments, and individual thanksgiving psalms – although some psalms exhibited mixed forms or even subcategories to the main forms. Later two genres were added to the main categories: enthronement psalms³⁸³ and royal psalms³⁸⁴, which are the categories most fruitful for examination in this study. While kingship is one of the main themes of the psalms, the psalms that explicitly discuss the king's position as mediator between god and the people are few.³⁸⁵

Mowinckel pointed out that traditionally all of the psalms have been connected to kingship, associated with the characters of David and Salomon as they were, and that most of the psalms have been categorized as royal psalms of a sort.³⁸⁶ In Gunkel's theory, psalms sharing a *Gattung* also had to share the same *Sitz im Leben*, or use, which often translated into a shared cultic setting: they had to express similar thought, feeling, and mood and finally, they had to exemplify similar style, structure, and vocabulary (i.e., *Formensprache*).³⁸⁷ While these categories have proved themselves useful tools in Biblical research, they do not come free of caveats. Smith warned against allowing the genre of a text to dictate its reading or, in the worst case, even to generate the discourse on them.³⁸⁸ For example, there are Hebrew and Ugaritic texts that display the same vocabulary

³⁸² On the prophetic activity in the OB kingdoms, see Van der Toorn 2000.

³⁸³ Enthronement psalms, the central motif of which is Yahweh's enthronement, include Pss. 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, and 99.

³⁸⁴ Royal psalms, the central motif of which is Yahweh's kingship, include Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, and 144. See Starbuck 1999, 19–66, for discussion. The term "*Königspsalmen*" is used in the German context, for which see Loretz 1988b.

³⁸⁵ Loretz 1990, 206.

³⁸⁶ Mowinckel 2004, 46–47.

³⁸⁷ Gunkel 1926; Gunkel & Begrich 1933. Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 53–54, submit that assigning a single *Sitz im Leben* to the psalms would be too simple.

³⁸⁸ Smith 2002a, 23.

and thought but which do not employ the same style.³⁸⁹

It seems quite clear that Hebrew poetry has used NWS poetic themes, motifs, and vocabulary quite liberally. Some of the genres of literature in the two corpora are shared, but there are also genres unattested in one or the other.³⁹⁰ There may have been several reasons for adopting the language of NWS mythology (or merely inheriting of locally generated forms of the same), whether directly or indirectly. It would be useless to propose that the aspect of creation never factors into myths of divine combat, and it would be equally useless to claim that we never find the aspect of creation present in the HB in connection with these proposed traces of or references to these ANE myths of divine combat. Gunkel, while he was working with much less evidence than we are in possession of today, may still have been correct in his assessment that in certain passages, it is echoes of the Babylonian *EE* that we find. But there are also passages that have found much closer parallels in the epic poetry of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Yet it must be remembered that there is also a difference between the epic poetry and the psalms in that in the psalms the mythic elements exist as hymnic fragments inside individual psalms and do not make up narratives.³⁹¹

Nordic Psalm research traditionally regarded the psalms as playing a part in a cultic drama that was a part of a New Year's festival in the area of Palestine and in which the kingship and domination of Yahweh over the forces of chaos was annually confirmed. The cultic drama would have served as a re-enactment of Yahweh's victory over these forces in the creation myth.³⁹² The Baal myths have also been connected to an autumnal New Year's festival in Ugarit, and H. Gottlieb suggested that the singing of the psalms would have functioned as a cultic activation of the myth, similar to how at ancient Ugarit the myth would have been acted out in a series of rites.³⁹³

The influence of *EE* and the Babylonian Akītu festival is fairly obvious in

³⁸⁹ See e.g. Pardee 1988.

³⁹⁰ On the genres of Biblical and NWS texts, see Parker 1997b.

³⁹¹ Gottlieb 1980, 65. See also Kloos 1986, 51, "the OT passages are not narratives but lyrical compositions, we do not meet with a fixed sequence of the motifs in this poetry. Its being lyrics is also an explanation of the fact, that single motifs out of the whole series could be left out. The Baal epic, on the contrary, had to narrate the events in a fixed order, which is the reason why the 'Canaanite' diagram shows fewer combinations than the OT diagram does". While it is true that narrative poetry must arrange events in a sequence, it is unclear whether this is what the Baal Cycle does.

³⁹² Mowinckel 2004, 106–192; 1950, 71; Anderson 1972, 232, Gottlieb 1980, 62; Craigie 1983b, 46; Curtis 1986, 102; Loretz 1990, 98–109; Rodd 2001, 362. According to Gottlieb 1980, 68, the victory was won specifically over Leviathan.

³⁹³ De Langhe 1958, 133, 139; Loretz 1990, 75; Gottlieb 1980, 65.

these historical reconstructions. The Babylonian New Year's festival, which reportedly took place in the spring, featured the re-enactment of a cultic drama in which the separation of the sweet waters from the salt waters took place, as well as the cleaving of Tiamat.³⁹⁴ While it is probable that both Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry contained a cultic dimension, such reconstructions run the risk of turning into flights of fancy.³⁹⁵ Although it is probable that the Ugaritic texts were meant to be read or chanted out loud, we have no evidence suggesting that they were acted out ritually. It is extremely difficult to use internal textual evidence to determine the *Sitz im Leben* of these texts in the absence of archaeological or administrative textual evidence for such a festival in Palestine or Ugarit.

The connection of the Biblical psalms and the Ugaritic texts has been especially studied in German Biblical scholarship. Loretz made a comparative study of the Ugaritic texts and the enthronement psalms with special regard to Ps. 24 in *Ugarit-Texte und Thronbesteigungpsalmen: die Metamorphose des Regenspenders Baal-Jahwe (Ps 24,7–9)* (1988). The Hebrew poetry contained in the book of Psalms has much to offer for the study of ancient Israelite religion and literature,³⁹⁶ even though the dating of individual psalms and even text portions within single psalms is often a matter of much disagreement among scholars. Even if the preserved literary form of a psalm could be dated, the dating of the oral traditions preceding it, or the possible older literary forms of the psalm, is often impossible. There must also have existed much more of Hebrew poetry than has been preserved for us. Although unified themes for the composition have been suggested – like the Davidic covenant³⁹⁷ – the book of Psalms is also heavily layered, containing poetic material from a time span of several centuries and from multiple sources, being of an anthological nature, or could even be described as a collection of collections.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Otzen 1980a, 13–16; Stoltz 1999, 738. According to Kuhrt 1987, rituals involved in the festival were enacted in public displays by the monarchs, often conquerors or usurpers, to legitimize their new rule and to demonstrate continuity with past rulers by manifesting the support of the gods for the new sovereign.

³⁹⁵ Von Rad 1947, attempted to reconstruct rituals of Israelite kingship on the basis of Egyptian parallels.

³⁹⁶ See Loretz 1990, 31–38, on the advances made in the study of Psalms with the help of the Ugaritic texts.

³⁹⁷ Walton 1991.

³⁹⁸ Alter 1978, 244; Craigie 1983a, 27, 35; Loretz 1990, 43, 51; Rodd 2001, 357; Mowinckel 2004, 85, 95–97, 146–158. Weber (2010, 738) has however written on the *Sitz im Buch* of the psalms, suggesting that, in the final redaction of the Psalter, individual psalms have become more than a sum of their parts. The discussion of Flint (1998, 458ff.) hints that at Qumran Pss. 1–89 and 90–150 may have been regarded as separate collections. The first group comprised an “early

Craigie, who was one of the pioneers of the comparative study of Ugaritic and Biblical literatures, was convinced that there were no demonstrable cases of direct borrowing from Ugarit in the Biblical texts, but that the Hebrew authors of the psalms used the religious language of the Canaanites in a polemicizing fashion against their neighbours' religious customs and views.³⁹⁹ In his opinion, NWS religious language and metaphor would have been preserved only in order to ridicule it. This, however, fails to explain why later authors and redactors, for whom this association between linguistic metaphor and living religious language must already have been lost, would have continued trading and preserving these texts. The reasons for the direct or, more likely indirect, adoption and use of 'Canaanite' language and metaphor in Hebrew texts may have been manifold.⁴⁰⁰

Some of these shared elements may be explained by natural linguistic development and a shared cultural sphere. There may have been a desire to diminish the impact of surrounding cultures by adopting, adapting, and even preserving their traditions, 'owning' the traditions in a sense, leaving us with the vestiges of transformed tradition – such as it is in the case of the Combat Myth.⁴⁰¹ In recent research the view that ancient Israelites must have been 'Canaanites' themselves, and therefore members of a shared NWS cultural milieu is more or less accepted. The shared aspects of the cultures of ancient Israelites and Canaanites would have included names, language, cultural traditions, and even religion.⁴⁰² This is infinitely more likely than the evolutionary view of religion, according to which the Ugaritic texts were a part of a primitive past from which religious literature developed in stages toward its highest, Christian form. Such presuppositions would make the examination of ancient texts in their own terms

Psalter", the arrangement of which was "virtually stabilized well before the second century BCE". He submitted that the early collections of psalms may have contained only this prior group of psalms.

³⁹⁹ Craigie 1983a, 34, 50.

⁴⁰⁰ Hutton 2007, 274, for example, presents the theory of 'mainstream' Yahwism, which was neither completely syncretistic nor completely puritan with regard to Canaanite influences. Loretz (1990, 14) thinks that the polarization between Israelite and Canaanite culture can already be seen in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. There is obvious shared tradition between the two, but it may also be that the polarization predates the texts of the HB (although likely not those from Ugarit).

⁴⁰¹ Van Henten 1999, 265; Hutton 2007, 274–275. Sasson 2008, 490, makes an important observation about the inspiration of ancient authors having been analogic, extemporaneous, and adaptive of previously circulated materials.

⁴⁰² De Moor 1990, 108. Widengren 1958, 155: "In the Ugaritic mythological poems a connecting link was found between Israel and Canaan, with the ANE providing the general cultural background".

very difficult.⁴⁰³

It was Day who prominently stated that most of the evidence concerning the battle between god and, in his words, “the dragon”, in the HB seems to come from the Psalms.⁴⁰⁴ A review of the evidence seems to support this assertion, insomuch as the Combat Myth is concerned. Direct parallels between the Ugaritic texts and Biblical poetry have been suggested for some Psalm texts, such as 74:13–14 and 89:10–11,⁴⁰⁵ which have been compared with KTU 1.3 III 38–46. According to Hutton, the texts accord in vocabulary and thematic unity as shown by their syntactic repetition.⁴⁰⁶ But the tendency is more toward indirect influence, the similarities between the two corpora springing from a shared cultural milieu. Hermann, Westerman, and Day, among others, viewed these Biblical texts as celebrating Yahweh as the vanquisher of Yamm and other sea monsters of Ugaritic myth.⁴⁰⁷ While many advances in the study of both the Ugaritic texts and of Biblical poetry have been made since Craigie, I do accord with him on the importance of the Ugaritic body of literature in the comparative study of the HB. I also agree with him in that it is especially in the field of poetry that we are able to find most points of connection between the literatures, both linguistically and thematically.⁴⁰⁸

Dever was also among the prominent scholars to press the fact that the discovery of the Ugaritic texts revolutionized our understanding of both the Psalms and of the early Hebrew poetry of the Pentateuch and that this understanding must affect their translation. According to him, the Ugaritic texts offer us a window into the conceptual world of the “Canaanites” from which ancient Israel sprung forth. He also believed that the Ugaritic texts would allow us to get closer to the origins of Israelite poetic literature. He went so far as to claim that it would allow us to get 600 years closer to its origins. Dever brings out an important point in that the similarities between Israelite and Canaanite religions have been known for some time, but that the nature and continuity of the contact has been played down to highlight the special nature of ancient Israel.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰³ See Avishur 1994, 8; Loretz 2002, 404; Wyatt 2003, 142–145. Bonnet & Merlo (2002, 78) point out that the aim of historical investigations is not to judge and to grade the different traditions but to understand them.

⁴⁰⁴ Day 2000, 99.

⁴⁰⁵ Widengren 1958, 172: “a perfect parallelism between the two has been demonstrated”.

⁴⁰⁶ Hutton 2007, 302.

⁴⁰⁷ Herrmann 1999a, 138; Westermann 1999, 229; Day 2000, 99.

⁴⁰⁸ Craigie 1983a, 47–49; Loretz 1990, 29, 230; Segert 1999, 170; Hutton 2007, 271.

⁴⁰⁹ Loretz 1990, 51, for example, believed that the comparative materials allow us to see the

According to Dever, the rituals of the religious traditions were “practically the same”, even if one assumes that the Yahwistic theology of Israel was a novelty. Dever also suggested that it may be possible to use the Ugaritic corpus to prune some of the later additions to or erroneous interpretations of the Biblical texts made by later copyists.⁴¹⁰

Müller (2008) established that there were traces of Yahweh as a weather-god in some poetic texts of the HB, especially in Pss. 18:4–20, 29:1–10, 93, 97:1–7, and 104, that cover the full gamut of the “Motivkreis” (which seems to correspond to a mythic constellation) that he devised for the motif, while others like 24:1, 7–10, 36:6, 48:2–9, 65:7, 77:17–20, and 98:4–9 contained assorted elements of the tradition. Müller’s analysis of the texts is extremely thorough and there is little reason to doubt his conclusions as to the presence of a weather-god both in these texts and in the intellectual world of the ancient Israelite. However, when it comes to the contextualization of this tradition in its wider ANE framework (and it must be admitted that this is not the central focus of this thesis) he draws analogies somewhat uncritically. He seems to suggest that because certain conditions existed in one place and time (like the OB Yamhad or Sam’al), the conditions should necessarily have existed at another place and time where we find the constellation (although “in ganz anderen Form”) without offering any explanation as to why the tradition should have persisted and re-oriented.⁴¹¹

Müller defined the *Motivkreis* as containing the presence of thunder, the window of heaven from which rain issues, Yahweh controlling the storms and the flames, riding a cherub and with the chariots of clouds, showing his might with the breaking of cedars and the shuddering of the earth, the battles against mythical foes, and many others.⁴¹² The major problem with defining this *Motivkreis* or constellation is that he does not explain why these facets are a part of the motif. We do not find this combination of elements in any ANE tradition. One gets the impression they are picked piecemeal from Ugaritic and other ANE traditions, but they do not correspond to any single source outside the HB. How are we to ascertain that they are a part of the same tradition? He observes a similarity between the traditions, but that is not enough to establish parallels between them.

continuity of centuries of tradition on the one hand, but also a cultural and religious transitional phase on the other.

⁴¹⁰ Dever 1990, 33–34, 166. Similar thoughts have been expressed by Widengren (1958), Wyatt (2003), and Mowinkel (2004).

⁴¹¹ Müller 2008, 236–250.

⁴¹² See full list in Müller 2008, 238–239.

He also alludes to the political conditions of the Amorite city states and that we should find echoes of these political conditions in the royal theology of the HB, but he fails to elaborate on what these political conditions were. My thesis could be viewed as both inverse in method and complementary in focus to his thesis, and I am hoping to be able to demonstrate a reasonable theoretical framework for why we should find these traces, fragments, and remembrances of OB traditions in the HB.

Müller also briefly discussed the Combat Myth, specifically the NWS myth of the Storm-God's battle against the sea, concluding that the Mariote evidence is so meagre that one can draw few conclusions based on it beyond it being connected to kingship through the weapons that the Storm-God gives the king for the strengthening of the dynasty. Referring to Schwemer's study,⁴¹³ he submitted that the "Mythologeme" was known in "numerous places" during the second and first millennia, the most famous of these the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and *EE*, which he called "variants".⁴¹⁴ He saw this tradition (that he seemed to consider monolithic in spite of the differences he briefly enumerated between the Ugaritic, the Egyptian, and the Psalm traditions) behind the allusions ("Anspielungen") to the motif in the HB. While he saw the HB allusions as a continuation of the tradition, he also considered them separate and different (listing details in which they differ on p. 62, although on the same page suggesting that they are not essentially, "grundsätzlich", different).⁴¹⁵ But once more he fails to explain how or why the Aleppan tradition influenced the coastal region, providing not so much as a footnote to a study in which the influence is discussed. One assumes that it is general knowledge "the myth" had a wide and captive audience in the region because of some panhuman (or pan-ANE) appeal of the motif of god protecting the earth from chaotic forces.⁴¹⁶

The difference between the literary conventions of the psalms and the epic poetry of Ugarit ought to be stressed, as should our limited understanding of the Ugaritic language.⁴¹⁷ Its similarity to Hebrew may sometimes be deceptive, and

⁴¹³ Schwemer 2001, 229–237.

⁴¹⁴ Müller 2008, 59–63.

⁴¹⁵ "Allerdings zeigt schon die Rezeption im Aleppo des 18. Jahrhunderts, wie der von der nordlevantischen Küste stammende Mythos einen weiten geographischen Raum beeinflusste". Müller 2008, 62.

⁴¹⁶ "Er bildet auf einprägsame Weise ab, dass die Erde und das Leben beständig durch chaotische Kräfte gefährdet sind, und erzählt, dass nur die überlegene Macht eines Gottes diese bezwingen kann". Müller 2008, 62.

⁴¹⁷ De Langhe 1958, 127–129; Craigie 1981, 106–109; Craigie 1983a, 54–55; Pardee 1981, 135;

seemingly similar words and terms may in fact find no correspondence. It must also be stressed that during the early days of comparative studies between Ugaritic and Hebrew texts there were many suggestions made and conclusions drawn – perhaps due to the excitement of having such a fascinating new corpus for comparisons – which later research has shown to be poorly argued, hypothetical, or even completely false.⁴¹⁸ My intention in this study has not been to force similarities between the texts of these bodies of literature, but to be ever mindful of the differences. Sometimes differences between two closely related traditions may even be more illuminating than superficial similarities. The main problem in contextualizing the Biblical texts is in the scarcity of historical information we have for ancient Semitic conceptions, the monarchic institution among them. But before I begin examining the ancient texts, a word on method is required.

3. On Methods

3.1 Methodology Employed in the Study

This chapter contains discussion on the methods used in the study, both with regard to the ancient texts and their translation, as well as the way in which they can be used for this type of historical-critical study. I have employed a broadly form-historical method with regard to the texts. During the course of the investigation I have used form and tradition -critical approaches, and a comparative or contrastive analysis of Ugaritic epic poetry, Akkadian language diplomatic correspondence, and Hebrew prophetic and psalmodic poetry. Because comparing such heterogeneous witnesses entails the danger of distorted conclusions,⁴¹⁹ I have also engaged in a method that I call **textual triangulation**, which is described at some length in this chapter. While the sources of the mythic traditions in the HB are discussed in the thesis, I have not engaged in Biblical source criticism (*Literarkritik*) as such, as my investigation is concerned with the transmission of ideology rather than the transmission of texts, and I am not attempting to establish genetic connections between the text corpora.⁴²⁰

Avishur 1994, 36; Loretz 2002, 405.

⁴¹⁸ See De Langhe 1958, 127; Craigie 1981, 99–100; Loretz 1990, 29.

⁴¹⁹ See Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 80.

⁴²⁰ On methods in Biblical Studies, see A. Gottfried, O. Kaiser & G. Werner, *Einführung in die exegetischen Methoden* [München: 1975]. The attempt by Biblical scholars to establish genetic relationships between the HB and comparable ANE texts was criticized by Bonnet & Merlo

With regard to tradition criticism (*Traditionskritik/Traditionsgeschichte*), I have examined possible tensions and contradictions in the texts, which may be caused by the different sources of traditions. The purpose of tradition criticism is to discover the types of changes and interpretations which may have occurred in texts during the course of their transmission. It is one of my theoretical premises that traditions older than the time of their writing have been preserved in the texts of the HB, especially in poetry, which has probably preserved some vestiges of orally transmitted tradition from the NWS cultural sphere. Albeit a rather late example, ancient Israelite society was part of the broader NWS culture surrounding it, both with regard to religious and mythical thought, in addition to sharing the very institutions of society.

Tradition criticism and cultural-historical analysis are not concerned with individual idioms or phrases (the most pertinent of which I discuss in more detail), but broader and less strictly connected themes, as well as the comparable textual material of surrounding cultures. Examining both the *similarities* and the *differences* in parallel materials, while mapping out the background of texts, should help with their interpretation, especially in terms of contextualizing relevant passages. Through this analysis, the unique features and special emphases of texts can be brought to the forefront. But the special features of individual texts are considered only insofar as they help elucidate the traditions. Through tradition criticism, earlier literary or pre-literary forms (and different phases of these forms) of particular units of poetry are examined, with the assumption that the forms of the text have likely altered during the process of transmission.

Where applicable, I have examined the textual material by means of syntactic, stylistic, and semantic analyses. In *syntactic analysis*, verses and their individual words have been examined in the context of the mechanics of NWS poetry. For the elucidation of expressions, a *grammatical analysis* of words in their syntactic context has been undertaken. When necessary, the meanings of words are derived from their roots, or from their attributives, predicatives, and the words to which they are attached. In *stylistic analysis*, special attention has been paid to poetic parallelism and word-pairs which appear in connection with the word(s) for 'sea', as well as the genre and register of the texts. Finally, *semantic analysis*, where attention is paid to expressions and their meanings, has been used

to uncover the particular meanings of words by examining their etymologies, different translations, and contexts.⁴²¹

This thesis is fundamentally not a linguistic investigation, however, even though the examination of some questions regarding grammar, vocabulary, and syntax has been necessary in the pursuit of a socio-historical investigation. On these points, J. H. Hospers' comprehensive *A Basic Bibliography for the Study of the Semitic Languages* (1973) in two volumes may be consulted. This study is also not meant to be a comprehensive examination of the Hebrew texts, as a detailed analysis of such a broad range of passages and their individual textual contexts would not be feasible or practical within the scope of a dissertation. The Hebrew texts have also been subjected to detailed exegetical analyses over the years; thus, the approach taken in this dissertation has been the perusal rather than the recreation of such studies. What I present in this dissertation is a *survey* of Hebrew poetry in light of ANE evidence, the evidence in question comprising of textual, iconographic, and archaeological examples.

During the course of the investigation I have also paid attention to questions concerning the context in which the lexical items are used, such as material culture, history, and geography.⁴²² As Talmon writes:

At times, some measure of comprehensiveness can be achieved by the accumulation and interweaving of diffuse fractions of 'abstract' thought which a thorough investigation may bring to light in the available records. In a way, the modern student of the Hebrew Bible is called upon to emulate the ancients' modes of thinking 'conceptually' by association rather than by systematisation.⁴²³

While I find no fault in trying to extract meanings from ancient texts through systematization, I do agree with Talmon that an attempt to emulate ancient thought is necessary to uncover these meanings, and that perhaps the only way to do this is through conceptual association – although this must be done with respect for the native categories. Association is a key to understanding the vestiges of pre-textual beliefs which may be found in the HB. Ross succinctly formulated the underlying hypothesis of the current investigation:

No doubt there had been changes in the worship of Israel since the early monarchy, and much that had once been taken more or less literally was now mere metaphor; but old associations of ideas survived.⁴²⁴

However, all of these analytical tools are used with the express purpose of a better understanding of the traditions of the Combat Myth.

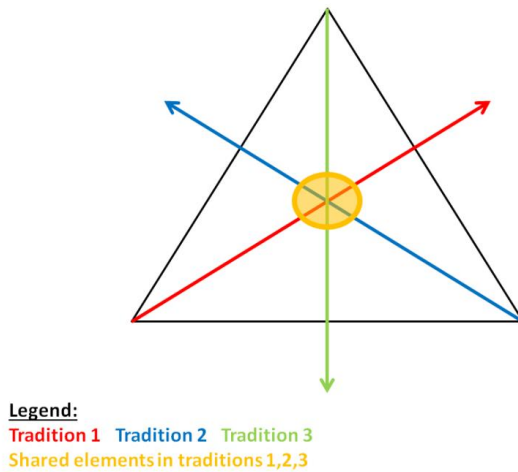
⁴²¹ For an overview of the analytical methods, see Sweeney 1999, 58–89.

⁴²² On the problems of comparative studies of ancient texts, see Loretz 1979, 1–9; Bonnet & Merlo 2002.

⁴²³ Talmon 1987, 119.

⁴²⁴ Ross 1967, 86.

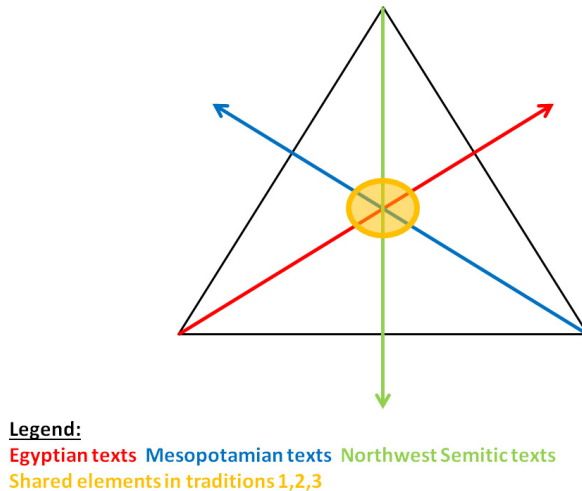
In contrast to traditional form criticism, I have employed not only older and contemporary texts, but also textual witnesses which are considerably *younger* than the hypothetical target tradition, thereby introducing a method I call ‘**textual triangulation**’. The basic principle of the method may be presented by the following graph:



In this method, diachronic points of reference from *around* the fixed temporal point where information is desired are used to approximate the information content of the target. For example, if we desire information from the Iron Age from a time period from which no textual records remain or have been preserved, we must choose sources of information which are both older (Tradition 1, Tradition 2) *and* younger (Tradition 3) than the target, in order to reach an approximation of the desired data (within the circle of ‘Shared elements’) where the older and the younger traditions *agree*. Proximity in time, geography, and spheres of cultural contact all increase the probability of cultural interaction leading to influence.

The same may be done with geographic locations. Using information from *around* the area where no information exists (or is scarce) but is desired, the hypothesis states not that the traditions must converge along their central axis, but that an approximation of information on the textually silent target area can be arrived at by examining the shared traditions of different geographic locations at divergent points *around* the area where information is desired. For example, if we have no extant sources from the area of Palestine, we must choose points of reference from around Palestine (e.g. Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia), and it is

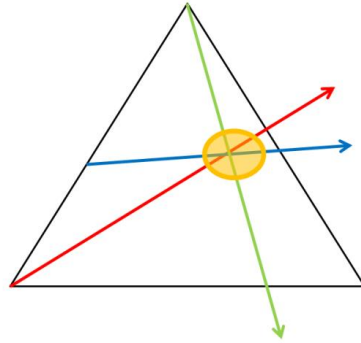
where these surrounding traditions *agree* with each other that we may find an approximation of the shared traditions which probably also existed in the central location. While the area of ancient Palestine was likely not a central hub of cultural exchange,⁴²⁵ it was a point of convergence for certain traditions, and this convergence may be presented in the form of the following graph:



It must, however, be noted that if and when literary or cultural elements are exchanged, the adopters of the traditions may transform them and use them with marked difference to the original traditions. Cultural exchange notwithstanding, the information content may not necessarily correspond. And conversely, similar functions or contents may be typified by different genres across cultures.

While I call the method triangulation, it is not necessary for the observed traditions to number three – the intersection of any number of traditions upward from two may be observed. An increase in the number of relevant traditions that may be compared and contrasted merely strengthens the validity of the comparison. Within the scope of this thesis, the broader use of the method may be presented in the form of the following graph:

⁴²⁵ The Bronze Age international network has been studied recently by Sauvage 2012.



Legend:

Mesopotamian royal inscriptions Old Babylonian political correspondence Myths of the EM
 Shared elements in traditions 1,2,3

The existence of a tradition in both the older data and the younger data suggests a continuum, a persistence of tradition, making the absence or divergence of the tradition anomalous in relation to the mean.

As the tracing of an individual lexical item (like ‘the sea’) even inside a single tradition would be impractical, and the tracing of a simple motif (like ‘divine combat’) would be imprecise,⁴²⁶ I have instead opted to trace of a pre-defined semantic constellation and the clustering of thematic lexical items based on the vocabulary and terminology of the oldest textual witnesses. Within this framework, I have searched the Biblical texts for shared semantic clusters and mythic constellations⁴²⁷ akin to the ones we find in connection with the Combat Myth in the Ugaritic and Amorite texts, using them as a kind of heuristic. The semantic clusters feature keywords such as *sea* (and the known proper names of monstrous creatures), the parallelism of *sea* + *river*, *storm*, *Yahweh* + weapon (*hand*, *sword*, *club*), storm imagery + weapon, *king*, *beloved*, *flood*, *lightning* // *thunder*, *clouds*⁴²⁸ // *chariots*, and *throne* or *seat*, in different combinations.⁴²⁹

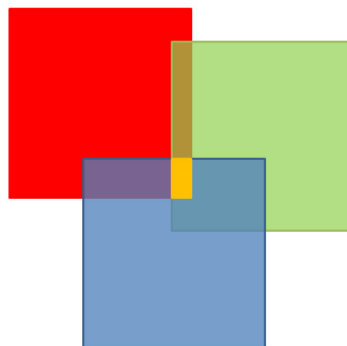
⁴²⁶ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 80–81. According to them, the comparative method can make use of lexicographical elements, which in and of themselves are not sufficient to establish direct cultural connections. They discourage the use of the comparative method on isolated elements and suggest that it ought to be used instead on “cultural systems, global structures, conscious and unconscious, in order to avoid erroneous conclusions based on a single element”. This is a tight-rope I am conscious of walking in this dissertation.

⁴²⁷ This refers to a configuration or assemblage of related ideas or characteristics. A similar methodology was employed by Miller II, 2013, although the constellations that he applied to the motif (the defeat of chaos, mount Zaphon, rivers of paradise, and the foreign nations) differed from mine. The constellations I have searched for are not motifs, but combinations of terms connected to the myth in alternative traditions. I do agree with Miller II that “motifs and terms borrowed from the Ba’al stories are found in combination”.

⁴²⁸ Seow (2013, 344) stated that “all kinds of clouds [...] are associated with theophany and with divine activity”.

These are terms which feature prominently in connection with the Combat Myth in all of the three major textual corpora used for comparison in this dissertation. Furthermore, if in the vicinity of these terms there can be found elements featured in ancient Semitic mythological texts which do not directly pertain to the Combat Myth (e.g. the parallelism of widow and orphan), the existence of such elements *increases the probability* of the terms having belonged to the same mythological constellations as in ancient Ugarit or Mari. With regard to the mythic constellations, I have examined the different employment of motifs and the individual aspects of the myths, such as creation or the splitting or drying up of the sea, which may allow for the assigning of different sources for the influence.

The method I have devised is different from the usual approach, which I would describe in juxtaposition to it as ‘textual trilateration’. The usual synchronizing method in Biblical studies uses all of the (pertinent) information from the available traditions to arrive at shared traditions by tracing the transmission of the extant textual materials and looking for *direct* and *apparent* literary connections between them.



Legend:

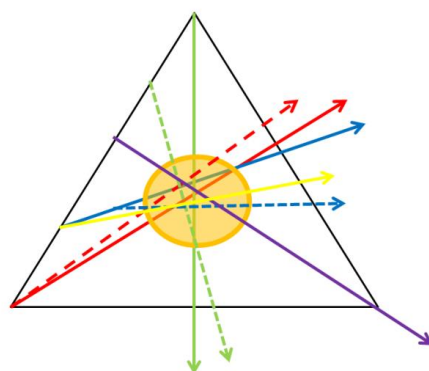
Tradition 1 Tradition 2 Tradition 3
Shared elements in traditions 1,2,3

This trilaterating method can synthesize available existing data to arrive at more or less accurate results where the traditions interlace, but makes what amounts to educated guesses about data that falls outside the examined dataset; conversely, textual triangulation can approximate hypothetical but contingent data, suggesting

⁴²⁹ It is perhaps not coincidental that many of these are in what Wilson (2014, 142) dubbed “exodus and creation imagery”, in which he lists the mighty arm, the drying up of the sea, the deep, the crossing over, and the redeemed.

probabilities. While the results of the triangulating method are less specific, they are able to accommodate a wider network of interconnected parallels. By observing the proportion of the sample in the dataset, it also allows the drawing of an abductive – rather than the trilaterating method’s weak inductive – conclusion, or at the very least, an *abductive validation* of the hypothesis.

The following graph displays the particular traditions under examination in this thesis, sketching their individual developments and where the examined traditions can be seen to interconnect:



Legend:

Royal inscriptions // Mesopotamian myths OB texts // Hittite myths Ugaritic texts Egyptian texts Eastern Mediterranean myths // Biblical texts
Shared elements in traditions 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

My working hypothesis is that, even though the extant HB texts at our disposal are (in the context of the graph) at the tip of the green dashed line that falls outside of the circle of the Shared elements in traditions, by observing the interconnecting traditions within the circle of shared elements it may be possible to approximate information from the green dashed line that falls within the circle of shared elements.

While it is reasonable to assume that some amount of cultural change and exchange can indeed be observed in the texts, because the material with which we have to work is extremely limited, it is difficult to demonstrate direct lineages (in the sense of a sequence of borrowing) in texts or even parts of texts. This tracing of *direct lineages* is what I mean by ‘textual trilateration’, as opposed to triangulation. The temporal distance between the text corpora under examination is also not insignificant.⁴³⁰ The timespan that passed between the writing of the

⁴³⁰ The temporal, geographic, and cultural distance between Ugarit and Israel is discussed by Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 395–396.

Mari texts and the texts from Ugarit, on the one hand, and the Ugaritic myths and the final forms of the Biblical texts, on the other, can be measured in centuries. This diachrony makes any attempt at comparative analysis of the texts undeniably synchronizing.⁴³¹ But it is also important to note that these societies did not exist independently. Looking at the chronological table I have provided in Appendix I, a cultural continuity existed in the ANE, even if the evidence of the textual corpora is bound to specific times and places.⁴³²

Similarly, the geographic distance between the communities that produced these texts is not negligible. One must be mindful of the cultural differences that the particular geographic conditions of these locations may have caused (inland Palestine, coastal Ugarit, Mari by the Euphrates). While there is an established direct link between Mari and Ugarit⁴³³ – people from one kingdom are textually established to have visited the other – there is nothing to link Ugarit to the area of Palestine beyond a few inscriptions in the coastal towns, written in the Ugaritic alphabetic script. The city of Ugarit was destroyed before the advent of the first Hebrew language inscriptions. And while Mari had an established trade relationship with towns in the Palestinian area, claiming direct influence from OB Mari to the HB texts is disingenuous.⁴³⁴ Using the ANE prophetic tradition as an example, Bonnet & Merlo discussed the methodological problems in comparative studies that use evidence from temporally distant cultural contexts. According to them, while the method is difficult, it is still essential for the history of religions – and, I would argue, for socio-historical investigations as well.⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 80. There have been attempts to narrow the gap between the Ugaritic and earliest Biblical texts, but none stand out as exceptionally successful. See Loretz 1990, 185, 194. Smith (2001a, 5), however, pointed out that out of all the comparative textual sources at our disposal, the Ugaritic texts are nearest to ancient Israel. See also Wyatt 2003, 141, 149. Wyatt (1998, 884) already claimed that the texts of Mari could be used for understanding both the Ugaritic and the Hebrew texts. In spite of the temporal distance, there are undeniable similarities between the texts on the level of phrases and metaphors and even complete verses. See Alter 1978, 244; Hutton 2007, 271.

⁴³² It should also be emphasized that such cultural continuity stretched across even the so-called Bronze Age systemic collapse, as it did not encompass all of the ANE, and it took place at different times in different locations. For the Bronze Age Collapse, see Chase-Dunn & Anderson 2005. Of course, political upheaval in one of more of the empires must have had an effect even on regions not directly affected by the turmoil of the era.

⁴³³ Discussed by Astour 1981, 7–8.

⁴³⁴ Some have entertained such notions, however. See e.g. Pardee & Glass 1984, 95: “We enter upon a different level of use for these texts, however, with certain interpretations of Biblical chronology in which the patriarchs of Gen. are dated to the same general period as the Mari documents”. Such views are only rarely entertained anymore. According to Sasson 1998, 455, the trend of Biblical scholars using Mari texts to reconstruct early phases of Hebraic history was most prominent from the 1950s to 1970s.

⁴³⁵ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79.

While I have made some text-critical observations on some of the texts I have examined here, their text-critical study is not the focus of this dissertation. With regard to text-critical research of the Biblical texts, I rely on the work of the compilers of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, as neither the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, the Hebrew University Bible nor the Oxford Hebrew Bible were yet available for my perusal during the writing of this thesis. I have accepted the commonly recognized emendations while being conscious of the fact that they may be subject to change with future research. The many parallels and the mechanics of parallelism between the Ugaritic and Biblical texts have been studied in great detail in the three volumes of the *Ras Shamra Parallels* (eds. Fisher 1972, 1975; Rummel 1981). The fact that parallels of varying congruity between the corpora exist is well established, and the Combat Myth is one of the better researched of these parallels. My intention in this dissertation is not to demonstrate that a connection between these Ugaritic and Biblical texts exists, but to examine how these particular texts were used in their respective cultural contexts, and whether it is possible to establish correspondences between the overarching ideologies. Rather than to attempt to showcase parallels, it is my intention to examine why these parallels exist, how they came to be, and what they can tell us about the cultural milieu and conditions that occasioned them.

Of the texts chosen, I have only examined the relevant passages, as poetic units lend themselves to examination out of their immediate context much more readily than other types of texts. As their context is sometimes artificial, occasionally irrelevant, and most often later than the individual units (cola) themselves, examining the units in their context does not necessarily aid in their interpretation, and it may sometimes even lead one astray.⁴³⁶ Walton discussed the need to study psalms in their contexts, separating the microcontexts (within pericopes) from the macrocontexts of the psalms. With the macrocontext, Walton is referring to the composition of the Psalter.⁴³⁷ The difference between microcontext and macrocontext is important. In this thesis, I remove psalm passages from their immediate or microcontext in order to view them against their broader socio-historical context – although I have not engaged with their context within the Psalter (Walton's macrocontext). The immediate context of the relevant psalm passages has been examined only insofar as the clustering of relevant

⁴³⁶ On the redaction of the Psalter see Mowinckel 2004, 146–158; Craigie 1983a, 27–32.

⁴³⁷ Walton 1991, 21.

terminology and vocabulary may present evidence of motif attraction.

A few definitions of terminology employed in the study are in order. A ‘text’ is a category in which I have also included iconography, understanding images in the sense that literary theory understands texts: as any object or structure that can be read and relays a message through the use of symbols (including words *and* spoken discourse), which is to say, not merely the sequence of words crystallized in a form that has been recorded by a medium like writing. Not only images and icons can function as texts, but also stories and narratives in the oral tradition. A text is a vessel for meaning. It is also important to understand the difference between a *text* and a *work*. It is the latter that necessarily has a literary form and an author, whether known or not, containing the physical aspect of words.

On the other hand, according to Barthes, a text is “that *social* space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in a position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder”. In Barthes’ view, it is *writing* – and not necessarily text – that is no longer in need of a ‘master decoder’, although the terms are overlapping.⁴³⁸ In my view, it is not the fixedness of form that defines a text, as a single text may have numerous slightly different iterations and variations, but the fixedness of form does define a *work*. A work suffers no alteration, lest it become a new work entire. In this dissertation, the focus is on texts rather than works, even though for the purposes of research, works may be more securely grasped and do more easily yield to analysis, while texts must remain ever elusive. In the examination of texts, however, I have had to rely on works.

Defining “tradition” is equally important, and just as difficult. T. S. Eliot’s *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1982 [1921]) was perhaps the first major contribution to an academic definition of the term, and it is especially pertinent here, as he wrote the essay in the context of poetry. Tradition, or the “handing down”, was to him a historical sense of the timeless, the temporal, and both timeless and temporal combined, and a perception of both the “pastness of the past”, and its presence. Employing tradition consists of existing monuments forming “an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new”. While this short essay concerned itself more with art than science, it

⁴³⁸ Barthes 1977, 164.

has to be considered a major stepping-stone for the discussion on the definition of tradition. The volume by Cianci & Harding *T. S. Eliot and the Concept of Tradition* (2007) contains academic articles reviewing the discussion sparked by Eliot's essay and how the idea of literary tradition was reformulated in the last century based on his thinking. It may be consulted for a broader definition of "tradition".

While this examination is focused on smaller units of interconnectedness between diachronic texts, and on larger units of texts only insofar as the smaller units have displayed a similar motif or theme in comparison with the broader texts, a few words on the subject of 'intertextuality' within Biblical studies also seem advised. Intertextuality has been a controversial topic in Biblical studies in recent years, and while the intertextual approach has certainly opened new vistas in Biblical research, the methodology comes with its own set of problems. The approach in this dissertation may be viewed as intertextual only in the sense that Kristeva (1980)⁴³⁹ originally coined the term: as the examination of *allusions*⁴⁴⁰ and *influences* in texts. But as I do not recognize the existence of quotations or direct borrowing between the text corpora at my perusal, given that hundreds of years separate the texts, the stricter definition of intertextuality would seem ill-applied.⁴⁴¹ Nielsen also warned that we must be mindful of how cultural memories were preserved in ancient societies, in order to prevent intertextual interpretations from devolving into free association.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Kristeva originally coined the term in the 1960s.

⁴⁴⁰ Allusion is a covert or indirect reference to an idea that only moves in one direction: only a younger text can allude to the older. An oft ill-defined term, 'allusion' is used to refer to textual points of contact between traditions that do not display actual textual parallels. Allusions, traces, references, remnants, and other vague and ambiguous terms are used in cases where some similarity between textual traditions is detected, but cannot be demonstrated with any exactness. The difficulty in defining these terms can be seen, e.g. in Human (2007, 149), as he attempted to describe how Hebrew poetry reflects ANE myths: "Biblical texts inhaled mythical motifs, elements or frames of thought from their neighboring environment" and, on p. 150, "mythic allusions, elements and motifs". For an attempt to define allusion, see Irwin 2001.

In the context of Latin poetry, Thomas (1986) constructed a six-fold categorization for allusions: casual, single reference, self-reference, corrective, apparent, and multiple. While allusions are often found in Biblical texts, the nature of the allusions is not often differentiated. Out of these, the *casual* (wherein specific antecedents are recalled by the use of language, yet in a general sense), *single reference* (reapplying an older context to a new situation), *corrective* (language is imitated with the intention of opposition to the older text – favoured by Biblical scholars in the past), and *multiple reference* (conflation of several sources is used in fusion and transformation of traditions) seem to be in most use with regard to Biblical texts. While I recognize that allusions of these different types exist in the texts, I have not applied the categories in this investigation, as they add little to the present inquiry.

⁴⁴¹ For a discussion on the problems of intertextuality in Biblical studies, see Miller 2010; Hays 2008.

⁴⁴² Nielsen 2012, 20.

Tsumura's admonishment to examine each Biblical text in their own context before comparing them to other textual materials is sound, although intra-Biblical exegesis has not been the focus of this dissertation.⁴⁴³ There seems to be an unfortunate tendency to deal with the Biblical witnesses to the myth *en masse*, as though there was one source of influence and a single context which could explain all of the incidences of this myth in texts of different genres, from different eras and probably also from different geographic locations.⁴⁴⁴ Müller, for example, ruminates that the tradition was probably mediated through the Phoenicians, while conceding that the Phoenicians were not the only possible "tradition-historical" direction of influence. Although he recognizes that the HB referents are local variants of the tradition, he still seems to assume that it had come from *somewhere* (with an implicit suggestion of somewhere *else*).⁴⁴⁵ The Combat Myth was not received into the intellectual world of the authors of the HB once and all at the same time, whether as intangible influence or source of conscious adoption, but several times and from different contexts, in addition to the living local traditions of the myth that most likely existed in the area of Palestine from at least the MBA onwards.⁴⁴⁶

Lambert pointed out that systematic religious history was not the ancient genre. However, he also held that any hypothesis that brings all the evidence together in a consistent whole bears the hallmark of truth, and deserves presentation in the interest of the continuation of discussion.⁴⁴⁷ While I agree with his position, and I have indeed attempted to bring together the evidence pertaining to the NWS Combat Myth in this study, I would like to add one important criterion for any hypothesis bearing the hallmark of truth: it must answer the question "Does the hypothesis help us *interpret* the text(s)?" There are many attractive hypotheses which either may or may not correspond to ancient reality, leaving us with no way of discerning what ancient reality actually entailed.⁴⁴⁸ But

⁴⁴³ Tsumura 2005, 197.

⁴⁴⁴ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79, for example, criticize the presentation of ancient "cultural units" as monolithic realities.

⁴⁴⁵ Müller 2008, 63.

⁴⁴⁶ Redford (1992, 45–46) discussed the dissemination of the mythology in the cities south of Byblos, including Aphek, Tyre, Joppa, Ashkelon and Gaza, which he places in the same tradition as the myths from Ugarit. There is no reason to posit that the traditions of the myth preserved in the HB are not a part of this continuum.

⁴⁴⁷ Lambert 1983, 86.

⁴⁴⁸ Svärd (2015, 131) also pointed out that the general methodological problem in the research of ancient cultures is that our translations are necessarily only close approximations of their original intentions.

any hypothesis that seems to clarify a text, to interpret a text in a fashion that is more sensible than the alternatives, must surely bear “the hallmark of truth”.

And yet one must remain conscious of the fact that the texts under examination are from various places and distinct periods, as the degree of comparability is not constant. Texts from different Early and Middle Bronze Age cultures may be compared in a fashion which is different from the employment of Persian or even Roman -era texts to solve problems in LBA texts. But as Burkert pointed out, however extensive the correspondence between two cultures may be, comparisons in and of themselves do not provide specific indicators for borrowings between textual materials, in contrast to the chance of parallel development, which is what we are most likely looking at with regard to the Ugaritic and Hebrew texts. According to Burkert, as we are dealing with spatially and chronologically linked spheres of civilization, insisting on completely separate developments or purely coincidental parallels is likewise ill-advised.⁴⁴⁹

In addition to the examination of the Mariote material, a comparison between Ugaritic and Hebrew texts – while diachronic – is useful, not only because of the linguistic affinity between Hebrew and Ugaritic, but also because the Ugaritic texts are the primary source for information regarding the NWS Combat Myth featuring the sea. Most of the textual evidence in the HB where the sea could ostensibly be linked with the idea of kingship features the river in connection with the sea. The sea and the river form a word-pair in NWS poetry, which is frequently featured in parallelism. They are also connected in mythology, and thereby intricately linked. It is for this reason that I believe it is especially useful to examine those Ugaritic, Hebrew, and other comparable texts wherein these two words are met in poetic parallelism (see section 2.3).

It is important to note that while Ugaritic texts are often considered representative of NWS culture, they represent only a small portion of it. It is by mere chance that the corpus of Ugaritic texts has been preserved for us, and indeed it enshrines the most comprehensive example of NWS literature. But it cannot be taken as a model or representative sample of all NWS literature or culture. Furthermore, we do not know whether the texts originated in Ugarit or whether they preserve literatures authored elsewhere and were merely stored or rewritten in Ugarit, due perhaps to their popularity or some significance of

⁴⁴⁹ Burkert 1992, 115, 120.

another sort. It must also be remembered that the texts from Ugarit come from different contexts: we have literature preserved in the palace and temple archives, as well as examples of literature stored by private persons. The texts also preserve only the very latest texts written in the city of Ugarit, as it is known that the older literature of the city was destroyed in an earthquake.⁴⁵⁰ The texts of the Mari archives contain similar problems with regard to representation of the larger OB cultural context, in addition to having unique problems of their own.

We must also contend with the criticism of Barcas on the relevance of Ugaritic texts for the study of the HB. He is quite right in pointing out that for the formative period of the literature of the HB, the Assyrian and Babylonian cultures were surely of more importance and relevance than the “Canaanite” (which I take to mean NWS),⁴⁵¹ although I am not convinced that the influence of the cultures adjacent to Israel ought to be completely discarded. It must also be stressed that while the period of the Babylonian Exile may have been the formative period for the Biblical texts as we know them today, it was not the formative period of the texts (using again the widest definition of ‘text’) *per se*; many of these can be shown through parallel materials (such as the Ugaritic corpus) to have had a lengthy prehistory – sometimes in a very literal sense. What the Ugaritic texts have introduced is an approximation of the cultural milieu in which the Hebrew corpus was formed.

While my main concern is the transmission of ideology via textual material, I have decided, where relevant, to examine some iconographic material as well – although admittedly this is not done in any systematic fashion. I recognize that the textual and iconographic witnesses often offer us divergent information on the traditions, but for certain conceptions one may help elucidate the other. According to Burkert, the various “channels of transmission” between cultures, containing the ritual, the iconographic, and the literary materials, are in no way mutually exclusive. He held that they may have overlapped and reinforced one another in various ways. Burkert also pointed out that in light of general human background and common tendencies of historical-social development, it is entirely possible that certain Bronze Age conceptions were revitalized by new incentives at a later date.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Singer 1990, 730.

⁴⁵¹ Barcas 1993, 1.

⁴⁵² Burkert 1992, 95, 120.

The focus of the dissertation is on the use of a religious-mythological narrative in the legitimation of real-world political power. In their article on relational structures in NWS religion, Petersen & Woodward note how the venture of studying NWS religions remains much more difficult than the study of NWS languages, as the latter has tools which allow precise comparisons, such as phonology and morphology.⁴⁵³ Categories for grammatical analysis are also more commonly accepted, whereas categories for the analysis of religious or social concepts lack not only acceptance, but also precision.⁴⁵⁴ The same is surely true of ancient political concepts, the study of which is still in its infancy. As the central focus of the thesis is on the use of the NWS Combat Myth, it is crucial to discuss my reading and definition of this myth in more detail, which is done in the following chapter.

3.2 From Conflict Myth to Combat Myth: Toward a Definition of the North West Semitic Myth of Divine Combat

This chapter contains an explanation, based on the previous chapters describing the history of research of the Ugaritic myth as told in the text of the Baal Cycle, of why I have opted not to use the traditional terms *Chaoskampf* or ‘Conflict Myth’ to refer to the narrative, and why using both a more accurate and more neutral name, such as “myth of divine combat”, seems better suited for the purposes of this study. In the text of this dissertation I have used the terms ‘Combat Myth’ and ‘myth of divine combat’ to refer to *the NWS Combat Myth between the Storm-God and the sea* specifically, unless otherwise indicated. The term ‘Conflict Myth’, which is often used in relation to myths of divine combat in the ANE, is too broad and ambiguous to be useful for a study which attempts to systematize evidence pertaining to these myths. Similar views were expressed by Batto (2013), and while our definitions of the myth itself differ considerably, his contributions toward a better understanding of the terminology pertaining to the myth are well-grounded. The idea of chaos was inserted into the myth from very early on – if indeed not from the start. Sonik notes that while Gunkel inserted the idea of chaos

⁴⁵³ E.g. Joosten 2005, 328: “linguistic stratigraphy is not an exact science, but it is rather more precise than dating literary motifs and theological ideas”.

⁴⁵⁴ Petersen & Woodward 1977, 233. They also refer to traditional analyses of mythology having been conducted in “methodological anarchy”.

into the discourse, George Smith had already described Tiamat as “sea-chaos” in his initial publication of *EE*.⁴⁵⁵

Although notoriously difficult to define with any precision, most myths – and indeed most narratives of any kind – seem to contain a conflict (and conflict resolution) of some kind, conflict being the inbuilt incompatibility of the objectives of any two characters or forces.⁴⁵⁶ If one is interested in examining the shared aspects of particular localized myths, as well as their distinctive characteristics, then these myths that have been dubbed as ‘conflict myths’, but which usually feature battles between specific divine characters, are in need of clearer definition. Sonik outlines the problem succinctly:

The application of chaos to *Enūma eliš* in such contexts [scholarly responses to Gunkel’s thesis] should generally be read as more conventional than deliberately descriptive, the term used in the most generic and neutral possible sense as a synonym for primordial matter (in whatever form this might take) or, more simply, for the original state of the universe. The question is, however, whether the persistence of the term in reference to the cosmogony in *Enūma eliš* is wholly due to convention or whether it has any real basis in the unfolding of events in that text.⁴⁵⁷

Or, one might ask whether the term has a basis in the text of the Baal Cycle. My answer to this is negative. In this section I seek to demonstrate my reasons for abandoning the chaos-cosmos paradigm. Sonik herself makes the distinction between a theomachy and a *Chaoskampf*,⁴⁵⁸ and while I have opted not to use the Greek term, I also view the myth predominantly as a theomachy, the battle being between two divine champions, both with a legitimate claim to power.

Furthermore, it seems that many universalizing claims about specific myths find their basis in oversimplification or misrepresentation of the evidence.⁴⁵⁹ Instead of discussing conflict myths, I shift the focus to myths of

⁴⁵⁵ Sonik 2013, 4. Batto (2013, 217) also pointed out that theory of the combat myth is nearly as old as Assyriology as a discipline.

⁴⁵⁶ The Sumerian story *The Debate between the Bird and the Fish* (e.g. AO 5396, BM 65147 + 68049 // CT 42 42 + 58 62) is an example of a myth of conflict between non-anthropomorphic characters. Ninurta’s battle against the Anzu-bird (or the turtle, in the Sumerian version) is a story of conflict and conflict resolution, and an example of a battle between a warrior divinity and an animal or a theriomorphic monster. Note that BT 4 iii 8–10 describes the cities of the enemies of the king “roaring like the Anzu-bird”, witnessing to the early political applications of these sorts of myths of combat, and using monstrous creatures to refer to the real-world adversaries of the kingdom

⁴⁵⁷ Sonik 2013, 13.

⁴⁵⁸ Sonik 2013, 23.

⁴⁵⁹ Kramer (1944, 77), for example, writes: “Obviously enough the dragon-slaying motif is not confined to the myths of Mesopotamia. Almost all peoples and all ages have had their dragon stories. [...] The names are different and the details vary from story to story and from place to place [...] it is not unreasonable to assume that many a thread in the texture of the Greek and early Christian dragon tales winds back to Sumerian sources”. This may be true if we attempt to find the smallest common denominator between the traditions, but there are also distinct characteristics belonging to these local traditions, and treating the stories as though they are interchangeable risks losing important data on the mythic traditions.

divine combat. In this section, I examine various myths of divine combat from the area of the ANE with special focus on whether it is possible to isolate features which are particular to the traditions of the myth found in the NWS cultural area. What are the features that set it apart from other myths featuring divine combat? I have suggested elsewhere,⁴⁶⁰ and I argue in this dissertation, that in these myths of divine combat we are able to distinguish two traditions, which I designate as the Western (North West Semitic or Syro-Palestinian) and Eastern (Babylonian) traditions, not so much based on differences in the basic narrative –while in detail the myths differ greatly, they do share features of narrative and motif – but on whether the aspect of creation is present in the myth.

Creation may have been implicitly read into the palace-building scene of the Baal Cycle, but the association is problematic.⁴⁶¹ It is the author's conviction that the aspects of creation did not feature in the oldest Amorite traditions of the myth, and indeed there is no textual evidence to suggest that they did. The texts attest to a plausibly Sumerian influence on the Akkadian/Babylonian development of the narrative. Much has been made about the similarities between EE and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle over the years, but this may partially be due to the two narratives having been used to fill in the gaps in one another.⁴⁶² If one first assumes that they go back to the same narrative motif or mythologeme, and both stories are subsequently used to fill in missing text fragments or used to interpret difficult passages in one another, then naturally the narratives begin to resemble each other quite a bit. Although he discussed the differences between the younger traditions at length, Smith, for example, saw in the Mari texts a link between the battle of Baal and Yamm in Ugarit and that of Marduk and Tiamat.

⁴⁶⁰ Töyräänvuori 2011. See discussion also in Day 1985, 18–37; Westermann 1999, 220–225; Stoltz 1999, 740. According to Stoltz, the division can be seen especially in the cultic textual traditions.

⁴⁶¹ Wyatt (2003, 151) suggested that the temple, or Baal's palace, may have been viewed as a microcosm of the world, and in that sense one can implicitly see the theme of creation in Ugaritic myth in the building of the palace. However, this does not make the narrative a creation myth *per se* (and, as I discuss in connection with the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, creation myths may in part have resulted *from* temple-building or the idea of building in general, mythologizing the concept of human creation). De Moor (1990, 69), on the other hand suggested that the people of Ugarit, like the Egyptians, would have believed in a creation that continued in history, a *creatio continua*. See also Kloos (1986, 145), who was likewise of the opinion that the battle against the sea should not be associated with creation narratives, even in Biblical literature. There is a case to be made for why the concepts should be regarded as separate, even if they have been conflated in *some* individual mythical traditions.

⁴⁶² The general tendency of using the comparative method to fill in the gaps of traditions was criticized by Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 79.

The Hybrid Babylonian Myth

In her treatment of *EE*, Dalley divided it into two parts: the creation story (which she called the *hieros gamos* or ‘sacred marriage’ part of the myth) and the *Chaoskampf*, clearly delineating the two strands in the narrative.⁴⁶³ Lambert likewise saw the narrative as “highly composite” in nature, combining several mythological “threads” into a single narrative.⁴⁶⁴ Even Kramer (1944), one of the most prolific early commentators on the myth, observed the Sumerian influences in what he called the “Semitic creation epic” – although he was convinced that the epic was of Sumerian origin: “even a surface examination of its contents clearly reveals Sumerian origins and influence”.⁴⁶⁵ Sumerian myths feature several scenes of divine combat. What differentiates the Sumerian myths from the NWS Combat Myth is that they do not feature the sea as a character. The sea had no special place in the Sumerian pantheon, nor was it understood as a particularly monstrous feature of Sumerian cosmogony.⁴⁶⁶ Sumerian creation stories feature themes of division and separation, the splitting of a whole into two halves, oneness (monad) into twoness (dyad), separation of the sky from the earth, and the organization of things.⁴⁶⁷ Sumerian myths of divine combat and their influence on *EE* and certain Biblical motifs will be discussed in section 6.1.

I would go further to suggest that there are three distinct parts to the narrative: the creation, the war between the generations of the gods, and the battle between Tiamat and Marduk. The first has its origins broadly in Sumerian mythology, the second in Indo-Aryan mythology (see *Theog.*), and the third in Amorite mythology. Weaving all of these narratives into *EE* served the political programme of increasing the legitimization of Marduk as the supreme god and Babylon as the centre of the universe.⁴⁶⁸ For an analogous construction of political

⁴⁶³ Dalley 1991, 329.

⁴⁶⁴ Lambert 1986, 56–57. Sonik (2013, 22) correctly pointed out that *EE* is still a single unified narrative (unlike, I would argue, the Baal Cycle, which does contain disconnected motifs and scenes). Calling it a composite text may be going a step too far, but certainly it contains several traditions.

⁴⁶⁵ See also Smith 1997a, 84–85.

⁴⁶⁶ Edzard 1993, 2; Westenholz 2001. Sonik 2013, 19, pointed out that it is impossible to speak of one single Mesopotamian cosmogony.

⁴⁶⁷ Kramer 1944, 38–39, 74; Westenholz 2001, 293. Westenholz interprets the monad as asexual and the dyad as bisexual. Note, however, the admonition of Scurlock (2013a, 59) that the creation was not a “mere mechanical separation but a process requiring a cognitive, pre- or para-creative act”.

⁴⁶⁸ Kuhrt 1987, 31.

mythology, the Alexandrine romances or the use of Hebrew Bible scripture in the New Testament may be considered. Jacobsen, one of the early commentators on *EE*, located the origins of the myth with the Amorites, suggesting that it was actually brought to Babylon by the Amorite tribes.⁴⁶⁹ The stories do share certain common elements, and in fact the originally Amorite myth may have been one of the building blocks or core elements of the later *EE*. As I am about to demonstrate, however, they also have distinctive features.⁴⁷⁰

The narrative of *EE* goes as follows: Tiamat and Apsu commingle their waters and procreate, and from them ensue the generations of the gods. The noise made by their progeny inside Tiamat vexes Apsu, who complains to Tiamat. She rages back, suggesting that the way of the gods be made difficult and the gods be subsequently ignored by the two of them, urging patience in her partner. When Apsu's minister Mummu counsels him, he sets out to destroy the gods. Apsu and Mummu are both put to sleep by the wisdom and magic of Ea, who then is defeated by him. Ea establishes his seat over Apsu. Marduk is conceived by Ea and Damkina inside quarters made from the defeated Apsu. Anu creates the four winds and gives them to Marduk as play-things. Due to Marduk's play, the gods could not rest, Tiamat especially. The gods then approach Tiamat, pleading with her to stop Marduk. Tiamat begins waging war against Marduk as the band of gods as her war council. She creates an army of god-like monsters and makes one of her children, Kingu, a general for the army. She sets his hands on the throne, gives him the highest position in the assembly of the gods, and hands him the tablets of destiny. Her proclamation ends the first tablet.

The second tablet begins with the rallying of Tiamat's troops. She is said to have treated her descendants even worse than Apsu. Ea finds out and brings word of this to Anshar, saying that even the gods that Anshar had created had joined Tiamat, and that she had created weapons and all sorts of monsters. He speaks of how Tiamat placed Kingu's hand on the throne and gave him kingship of the gods and the tablets of destiny. Anshar tells Ea to take responsibility for having killed Apsu and to soothe Tiamat's rage with his magic. Ea leaves and returns to Anshar a few times, overwhelmed by the task. The gods gather, defeated. The angry

⁴⁶⁹ Jacobsen 1968, 104–108. Jacobsen thought that the myth was brought to Babylon by the Amorites “late”, because the meteorological conditions of Babylon would not have allowed for it to have originated there. His conclusion may well be right, but his arguments leave much to be desired.

⁴⁷⁰ Kramer 1943, 70ff; 1944, 77, 114.

Anshar decides to send Marduk to avenge him. Wishing to have power like Anshar's in return for the task, Marduk vows that Anshar will soon step on the neck of Tiamat. The third tablet begins with Anshar recounting to his vizier Kaka what had happened in the story so far. Kaka leaves to visit Lahmu and Lahamu, repeating to them the words of Anshar. All the gods hold council to eat and drink. Inebriated, they decree that Marduk shall become the decider of fates, the king of the gods. In the fourth tablet, Marduk is initiated into kingship and Marduk tests his powers as the decider of fates. Marduk is given a sceptre, a throne, and a weapon. Marduk prepares his bow, puts lighting on his face, fills his body with fire and gathers his net and his winds, preparing for battle. Marduk takes the winds he had created and sends them to muddy the innards of Tiamat. Then Marduk conjures the flood, rides his storm-chariot, and arms and covers himself. The gods run around at the mere sight of him. Marduk defeats Kingu and raises the flood against Tiamat, accusing her of having been a bad mother to her children and having appointed Kingu as the leader undeservedly.

Tiamat loses her temper and casts a magic spell against Marduk. Marduk spreads his net around Tiamat, who opens her mouth to swallow the wind that Marduk sends against her. The wind keeps her mouth open and splits her heart, and Marduk shoots an arrow that pierces her stomach, innards, and heart. Marduk stands on the body of the slain Tiamat, whose troops flee at the sight. Marduk spares their lives but gathers and ties them up, apart from Kingu, whom he slays. Marduk takes from Kingu the tablet of destiny. Marduk starts stomping Tiamat with his feet and crushing her head with his club, draining her blood and sending it with the wind to take the good news to the assembled gods. Then Marduk, having rested, splits the body of Tiamat like a dried fish to create wonderful things, fashioning the roof of the heaven from one half. He orders a guard to keep watch of her skin, so as not to let out her waters. The fifth tablet, which is broken, recounts how Marduk uses different parts of Tiamat's corpse to fashion the heavenly bodies. The earth is made from her body, and the Tigris and Euphrates from her eyes. In the fifth tablet, Marduk arranges the stars and the heavenly bodies, and establishes the abode of the gods in Babylon. Mankind is created from the clay mixed with the blood of Kingu. In the sixth tablet, the Esagila of Marduk is constructed in Babylon. Marduk is declared the king of the gods and his fifty

names are uttered; these continue onto tablet seven.⁴⁷¹

The *EE* is a long and multifaceted narrative, which more than likely incorporates material from multiple sources. While there are several elements that liken it to the NWS Combat Myth of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, there are also many elements in the narrative that are distinctly Sumerian (and some which are possibly Indo-European), which are lacking from the Ugaritic narrative, such as the creation of the world by the act of halving of a whole, or the war between the generations of the gods.⁴⁷² We must also appreciate the fact that the impetus and impulse for the writing of the narratives appear to have been very different. Frymer-Kensky saw the Assyrian-Babylonian conflicts of the late 2nd millennium as the motivation underlying the ideological programme for the composition of

⁴⁷¹ Tablets I–IV. See King 1902; Lambert 1966. The first publication of the text, excavated by A. H. Layard from Nineveh, was by G. Smith 1876 in *The Chaldean Account of Genesis, Containing the Description of the Creation, the Fall of Man, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the Times of the Patriarchs, and Nimrod*. The most recent translation of the most recent text is in Lambert 2013.

Discussion in Ringgren 1990, 89; Fabry 1999, 101–101; Wyatt 2003, 152. I oppose the view of Kloos (1986, 118): “I cannot find that *Enuma elish* and the Baal-Yam myth have the same purport, seeing that the one is about the creation of the world and the other is not”. Ditto Bidmead (2004, 67), on the *EE*, according to whom the creation myth reflects the fundamental motif of the Akītu festival. For all of the differences between the mythic traditions and the ideological programmes that bore them, the purport of the myths is very similar: they are *about* kingship and, more accurately, the kingship of the gods. So also Scurlock 2013b, 258. This is the focus of the core myth, the rest is window-dressing. Creation is important only in the way that it establishes the source and origins of the ultimate force in the universe. In this, I also oppose Tugendhaft (2012a, 367), who interprets the text as an “explicit expression of a parallel between political hierarchy and cosmological order”. While we both see the central theme in the institution of kingship, Tugendhaft sees it as depicting the institution of kingship as it describes the structure of the world according to “fixed hierarchical order”, whereas I view the focus in the *act* of institution of kingship, not in the structure of the institution as such.

⁴⁷² See Fink (2013, 97) for discussion on how, while the Akkadian language has several words for ‘half’, the act of being a half in genealogical terms is alien to the language, further testament to the idea that the concept of halving in creation is of Sumerian origin. He also lists the Akkadian words meaning ‘half’ in footnote 55 on the same page. The Sumerian language has a richer variety for terms relating to half-measures and halving. Words denoting half include BA, KIŠI/ KIŠI₄, SA, SUR, ŠID, ŠU.BAR.RA, but Sumerian also has several specific terms for half units and half shares (e.g. ZUPAH, UPU, and ŠU.RI.A). Sumerian also has a word for half a circle, USAKAR.

What is striking is that many of the Sumerian words are either translated with the same Akkadian word, such as *mišlu*, or have been adopted into Akkadian from the Sumerian, like *ubū*. The Akkadian preference for measures of a third rather than a half may be due to the sexagesimal system of the Mesopotamians. However, while Sumerian mathematics was based on the sexagesimal system, the concept of a half seems to have been commonplace for them. The same idea is expressed by Fink on p. 101. From a review of Sumerian and Akkadian terminology we may conclude that the concept of halving is much more endogenic or intrinsic to Sumerian thought. In fact, out of the Akkadian words listed by Fink, only *mišlu* and *muttatu* seem to be without a readily apparent Sumerian progenitor – and since *muttatu* was, according to the CAD, especially in the earliest stages of the language also used to refer to a third, or an otherwise unspecified amount, one can conclude with some certainty that the specific concept of a half was unimportant and possibly *exogenic* to ancient Semitic thought, further evidencing the Sumerian origin of the splitting motif. Fink goes so far as to say that “we have no evidence for the idea that a child consisted of two parts in Mesopotamia”.

the text:

Enuma eliš was written after the statue of Marduk was returned to Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I. At that time the New Year's festival was officially reinterpreted to include a battle of Marduk against Tiamat. Much later, the return of the statue of Marduk from Assyria at the beginning of the reigns of Šamaššumukin and Aššurbanipal may have occasioned a similar new interpretation and religious assimilation. The ritual, which already celebrated a triumphant Marduk, was reinterpreted to include the most recent chapter in the story of Marduk. The commentary text was written to incorporate this historical event into the religious framework and to include a celebration of this event in all future Akītu celebrations.⁴⁷³

According to Nielsen, the return of Marduk's statue was an attempt to create an ideological understanding of both the recent past and the more distant past, which is why the narratives from the time of Nebuchadnezzar were reincorporated into the political mythology during the time of the Assyrian Sargonids.⁴⁷⁴ Although there are some striking points of affinity between Yamm and Tiamat, there was never any one-to-one correspondence perceived between the two. While there are certain theriomorphic qualities to Tiamat's description in *EE*, she is not described as a snake, a serpent or a dragon as such.⁴⁷⁵ Sonik has pointed out that it is only after her death that Tiamat takes on monstrous characteristics.⁴⁷⁶ The description of the Ugaritic Yamm is likewise anthropomorphic, even though many scholars are keen to portray him in lizard-like terms.⁴⁷⁷

While myths of divine conflict certainly existed before, the Amorite witnesses to a Combat Myth featuring a battle between the Storm-God and the sea are the oldest that are known to us – although, as I will discuss subsequently, the myth may be alluded to in a few texts from the Sargonic period.⁴⁷⁸ The main witness is the Mariote text FM 7 38, in which an official from Aleppo reminds the Amorite King Zimri-Lim of the fact that the storm-god Adad had given the king the weapons with which he struck the sea. This has usually been cited as the oldest extant witness to the *Chaoskampf*, although, as mentioned, there are a few texts which antedate it. However, the texts of the Baal Cycle present us with the

⁴⁷³ Frymer-Kensky 1983, 140–141. Nielsen 2012 also discussed the myth and the return of the statue in the context of Assyrian imperial propaganda.

⁴⁷⁴ Nielsen 2012, 12.

⁴⁷⁵ Ringgren 1990, 93; Van Henten 1999, 266.

⁴⁷⁶ Sonik 2013, 16.

⁴⁷⁷ Hendel (1999, 745) suggested that while there are also cylinder-seals from the area of Syria-Palestine in which a warrior-god opposes a serpent interpreted in light of the chaos monsters of NWS mythology, the symbol of the serpent was employed less in NWS iconography than in the iconographies of the ANE at large. According to Stoltz (1999, 738) the symbols of cosmic order were habitually framed by snakes in Babylon. They are supposed to have represented the chaos outside of ordered society. I suggest that it is a reference to the concept of using rivers and other bodies of water to demarcate the geographic boundaries of the kingdom and the world, the idea of which can certainly be read through the prism of the chaos-cosmos dialectic.

⁴⁷⁸ Niehr 2004, 727.

most famous example of a myth (or indeed, myths) of divine combat from the NWS cultural area, and it is one of the better-known ones from all of the ANE.

The Myth in the Baal Cycle

The Baal Cycle (of which 1,820 lines of alphabetic cuneiform text has been preserved) is generally no longer considered as one continuous narrative, but a compilation of separate narratives arranged together under a common theme. As far as we can follow the bare bones of the narrative, it is as follows: the first preserved column is badly damaged, but it seems to have contained a message from El to Anat. It may have featured the building of a palace for Prince Sea, but the words are difficult to interpret. The following column includes the journey of El's messengers to Kothar, the smith of the gods, perhaps for the purpose of instructing him on the building of the palace for Prince Sea.⁴⁷⁹ What follows is Kothar's journey to El. The next column starts with the summoning of the assembly of the gods, where El makes some kind of proclamation seemingly concerning Prince Sea (perhaps a royal adoption), which he follows by making sacrifices. Then follows a conversation between El and an unnamed god, possibly Prince Sea, where they speak of the arrival of Haddu⁴⁸⁰ and the coming battle between him and the god.

In the beginning of the second tablet, however, El seems to curse Prince Sea. Prince Sea sends his envoys to the assembly of the gods, commanding that the other gods obey him and that they relinquish Baal to him. Prince Sea has demanded that his messengers do not bow to El, the head of the assembly. The messengers arrive at the assembly, where Baal is waiting on the father of the gods, El.⁴⁸¹ The assembled gods lower their heads before the messengers, but Baal

⁴⁷⁹ Supported, e.g. by Belnap 2011, 50.

⁴⁸⁰ Haddu or Hadad appears to have been a NWS form of the Akkadian Adad, possibly meaning 'thunderer' (derived from the root *hdd*). Widengren 1958, 162f; Propp 1987; Stieglitz 1990, 11; Smith 1997a, 84; Schwemer 2001, 502–532.

⁴⁸¹ De Moor (1990, 78) has drawn attention to the fact that Baal is standing in the assembly while the other gods are seated, suggesting that Baal is subservient to the other gods at this point of the narrative. If Baal is interpreted functioning as the cup-bearer of El, it has an interesting parallel in the royal inscription of Šar-kali-šarri (E2.1.5.4), where the king fashions himself as the cup-bearer (SAGI) of Enlil, i.e. the dynastic divinity of the Akkadian Sargonids. Furthermore, this epithet is found on a votive object the king dedicated upon his return from a journey to the source of the rivers (Euphrates and Tigris). Note also that in Hittite myths the junior god functioned as the cup-bearer of the senior god until usurping the throne of the senior

rebukes them. The envoys deliver the message of Prince Sea to El, and El hands Baal over. Baal does not submit, however, but strikes the messengers. The goddesses Anat and Ashtart hold him back. Baal sends an enraged word back to Prince Sea via his messengers. The second column features Kothar's audience with El, and the request of the latter for the smith to build a palace for Prince Sea. What then follows is an interlude with Ashtar and Shapshu, which concerns either El's plot to dethrone Prince Sea or El shifting his patronage from Ashtar to Prince Sea.⁴⁸² Unfortunately, very little remains of the following column.

The last extant column starts with Baal's oath to destroy Yamm, and the joining of a goddess (Anat or Ashtart) and the smith Kothar to Baal's cause. Kothar fashions and names for Baal two weapons which leap from Baal's hand to strike his enemy.⁴⁸³ The second weapon strikes Prince Sea to the ground, and then Baal finishes him. Ashtart either chastises or advises Baal, which is followed by the proclamation of Baal's kingship by a male and female divinity, possibly Kothar and Ashtart. The name of Yamm is mentioned a few times in the following tablets, often in recounting of the action of the first two tablets, but he does not feature as a major character in them.⁴⁸⁴ As the text on the tablets stands, it is difficult to wring a coherent narrative out of it. In light of the older Amorite text from Mari, however, the important features are that the Storm-God uses weapons to finish off the sea, and his subsequent proclamation as king in KTU 1.2. IV 32: *ym.lmt.b'lm.yml[k]*.⁴⁸⁵ While many aspects of the narrative remain unclear, these particular features of the text are well supported.

There are several instances of a Combat Myth in the texts of the Baal Cycle, but the texts in the first two tablets are of particular relevance to my study. The first two tablets feature the battle between the storm-god Baal and his adversary, who is called Prince Sea. It has been suggested by Smith on the grounds of the epithets used in the text that the narrative of Baal and Yamm may

god in a cycle of servitude and usurpation. See Campbell 2013, 31. The roots of this motif may also be found in the Sargon legends.

⁴⁸² On El's shifting patronage, see Curtis 1985, 86. Belnap 2011, 50, interprets the scene as Shapshu warning Ashtar not to overthrow Yamm and that Ashtar "actually states that he would go to the palace of Yamm and perhaps plead for help". While the building of Yamm's palace seems to be discussed in the epic, there is no indication of one having been built for him.

⁴⁸³ The naming of the weapons was connected by Ginsberg (1935, 328) to Ez. 37:15, posing the question: "Is it too wild to suppose that a story about a hero who had two magic clubs called X and Y with which he vanquished his foes was also known to the folklore of Judaea, and that this is the source of those prophetic symbols?"

⁴⁸⁴ In the cases where his epithets *zbl* or *mdd il* are not mentioned, the word *ym* may not even refer to the character of Prince Sea.

⁴⁸⁵ Ginsberg (1935, 333) interpreted this as Yamm's dialogue: "I am dying, Ba'lu shall rei[gn]".

also be a composite of (at least) two separate stories.⁴⁸⁶ They may be two iterations of the same narrative, or two separate narratives featuring the same cast of characters.⁴⁸⁷ Reconstructing the narrative is difficult, because there are gaps in the text,⁴⁸⁸ and searching for a logical progression or sequence of events in a text where none may have existed is a difficult venture. Both tablets have several fragmentary columns, and the first column of the first tablet is completely broken off. There is also some debate about the order in which the columns of the first tablet KTU 1.1 ought to be read. Smith especially (but following Cassuto and Herdner) has espoused the reading of the columns in reverse order from the reading of the columns of other tablets.⁴⁸⁹ He argued that the summoning of the smith-god Kothar to build a palace following El's naming of Yamm as his royal heir makes better thematic sense than the reverse. Dijkstra analysed the word division in KTU 1.1, coming to the conclusion that there is too little in the way of epigraphic evidence to ascertain the order of the columns (while slightly preferring the reverse order).⁴⁹⁰

While Smith is indeed the world's foremost expert on the Baal Cycle, the line of his argumentation must be questioned. First, what Smith called "El's initiative in naming Yamm as the royal heir", referring to the fragmentary text of KTU 1.1. IV 13–32, is based on his interpretation of the meaning of extremely difficult lines. Secondly, the reversal of the columns does not actually add *coherency* or *continuity* to the narrative (his main argument for the reversal), but imposes a pre-conceived *metanarrative* on the text. And finally, we should expect to find other texts exhibiting similar ordering of columns. It must be noted that the third edition of KTU does not accept Smith's order of the tablets, although his theory is mentioned in the special remarks.⁴⁹¹ Dijkstra's argument on the basis of epigraphy has merit, and both orders of the columns deserve consideration. But we are missing such large portions of the text that neither order makes for a smoothly flowing, logically coherent narrative.

⁴⁸⁶ Smith 1994b, 1–28. In one text unit he is consistently called *mdd il ym*, in the other *zbl ym*.

⁴⁸⁷ Smith 1997a, 82. Translation of Smith's rearrangement of the columns can be found in Smith 1997a, 87–105.

⁴⁸⁸ The estimated original length of the Baal Cycle may have been 5,000 lines. Smith 1997a, 81. According to Wyatt (2003, 140), as many as half the tablets may be missing.

⁴⁸⁹ Smith 1994, 2–25.

⁴⁹⁰ Dijkstra 1987.

⁴⁹¹ See also Green 2003, 178.

The Myth of Divine Combat

In the search for the meaning of myths, it is important to make a distinction between how an ancient reader or recipient of the mythical narrative understood the texts, and how a 21st-century scholar interprets the same material. This distinction is sometimes wanting, imposing non-meaningful categories on ancient thought. At the same time, we should be cautious to not confuse the issue of how we think the ancients understood these texts with what we hypothesize about their actual functions. For example, while it is possible that the ancient recipients of the mythical tradition may have associated the myth with the passing of the seasons or seen it through the lens of annual festivals, it does not mean that the passing of the seasons was *what the myth was about*. How a scholar interprets a text and how it was received by its intended audience is a useful distinction. In this dissertation I am focused mostly on the former. In light of the evidence, the central focus of the myth is on the legitimization of kingship, whether or not the ancient recipient of the text would have recognized this interpretation at all (or whether questions of legitimacy would even have been meaningful in that context).

There are three levels of interpretation for ancient texts: the *meaning* assigned by its contemporary audience, the *reading* made by a scholar (e.g. through the dialectic of chaos and order), and finally the *construing* of the function of the myth in its social-historical context. This is why, although I question the usefulness of the reading of the myths through popular modern theories to answer questions about the function of myths in ancient societies, I do concede that these are valid interpretations of the texts. Reading the Combat Myth as the age-old battle of order and disorder or as a metaphor for the seasons is a perfectly reasonable reading of the text – although to claim that any one *reading* should supersede the others is a problematic assertion. The sea as an ideological and linguistic symbol was explored most recently in the articles of the volume edited by E. Ben Zvi & C. Levin, *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period* (2014).

My approach is different, however, and my intention is to examine what we can learn about the function of the myth within the societies that employed it through the contexts in which we find it used. The difference in the approach may be elucidated by the interpretation of modern popular narratives as *representing* the thematic of good's triumph over evil versus the narratives' *function* in

cultivating the public with the virtues and mores of the middle class. I am not arguing against interpretations of the sea as a part of the ancient symbolic system, but merely suggesting that the underlying logic needs explicating and that some of the commonly accepted assumptions are in need of re-examination. Most of the studies in the mythologies of the ANE are concerned only with the representations of myths, not with their functions. The former is also the focus of many of the functionalist theories on myths.

Trudinger described the core myth, which he called the *Chaoskampf* pattern, as a battle between a “heroic deity and the forces of chaos, represented by some powerful and hostile water-being, with the victory of the god resulting in the creation of an ordered cosmos from the corpse of the vanquish enemy and the assumption of absolute rule by the god”.⁴⁹² This is the most usual iteration of the myth in literature. The particular metanarrative imposed on the text by the translator greatly affects the reading of the text. Most likely the tablets we call the Baal Cycle contain separate texts, which were grouped together around the character of the storm-god Baal and were never intended to form one continuous narrative. While there seems to be a certain anthological nature to the texts of the Baal Cycle (although the degree of the heterogeneity of the texts is debatable), this does not imply a disunity of theme and vocabulary, or that the texts were grouped together at random. While the full gamut of the principles underlying the composition and grouping of the texts may elude us, we must assume that there was a reason behind their arrangement in their current form.

Batto’s definition (2013) of the “essential characteristics” of a Combat Myth states that it needed to fulfil the following criteria.⁴⁹³ first and foremost, it must account for the existence of the universe (the conflict is cosmogonic); the force of anti-creation in the myth is personalized by a “chaos monster”, varying from culture to culture and depicted in various forms, sometimes aquatic; the protagonist is the divine sovereign; the enmity between the protagonist and the antagonist is portrayed as a conflict, often a “primordial battle”; the antagonist is not vanquished forever; and the myth sometimes contains a theological or political agenda.

Batto also submitted that the narratives of particular versions may have originated in oral tradition, while only the written versions have been preserved.

⁴⁹² Trudinger 2001, 29.

⁴⁹³ The conditions are laid down on pp. 227–230.

In light of the likely Sargonic origin of the myth, I do not find this condition necessary. While the tradition is not inherently a literary one, from its inception it was meant to impress an audience. While there is much in Batto's discussion that I agree with, his outline is precisely what I meant as I mentioned the unhelpfulness of the too-broad definition of "Conflict Myth"; Batto offers this definition in the very same spirit, even as he argues for the promotion of the term "Combat Myth" in favour of the antiquated *Chaoskampf*.

It must be noted that Batto devised these criteria in opposition to the definition of a Chaos-battle Myth by Watson (2005).⁴⁹⁴ For Watson, the myth had to contain a battle between two opponents of relative parity (wherefore the sea cannot have been created by the god), the enemy of the god must be the Sea, and the god must slay the sea. According to Watson, the Combat Myth must also contain an element of chaos being defeated by the deity. Because, according to her argumentation, the term is not applicable to the intellectual world of the authors of the HB, the HB cannot contain an iteration of the Chaos Battle Myth. She also insisted that there must be reference to creation in connection to the battle motif for the presence of chaos myth tradition to exist, but as the battle myth is not a creation myth, the argumentation fails. The only one of her definitions that I find useful in light of the Amorite traditions is that the battle must be fought against the Sea. The *relative* parity of the opponents may exist in the traditions outside of the HB, but even in all of these traditions, the roles of victor and conquest do appear. The sea is not (at least permanently) slain in the NWS traditions, but it is defeated – possibly subjugated – and certainly contained.

In short, then, my own definition of the NWS Combat Myth is as follows: the myth consists of 1) the Storm-God's 2) combat 3) against the (personified) Sea, 4) from which the Storm-God emerges victorious 5) through the use of weapons. These are the *essential* characteristics of the myth. These are also the shared characteristics of the Mariote and Ugaritic traditions, and in this thesis I argue that this myth is a) derived from Sargonic political propaganda which used existing elements in the creation of what was a new myth, and that b) it is found in choice texts of the HB, albeit in fragmentary iterations. My chief divergence from Batto's discussion is that I do not view the myth as cosmogonic and see creation as a secondary development in the mythic tradition – a point which I discuss

⁴⁹⁴ The conditions are laid down on pp. 369–397.

elsewhere in the thesis.⁴⁹⁵

According to the Aarne-Thompson typology of narratives used in Folkloristics, a *motif* refers to a single narrative procedure or action, while the term *type* is used of complete narratives.⁴⁹⁶ Within this typology, it is possible to claim that the Baal Cycle and *EE*, as well as certain Biblical texts, do share some motifs (e.g. the use of weapons to defeat a foe), whereas they do not necessarily exemplify the same narrative type, depending on the stringency of one's definitions. It may be possible to broadly categorize *EE* into the 'Dragonslayer' type, but this type is hardly fitting for the narrative of the Baal Cycle.⁴⁹⁷ Even though I have chosen to use the term 'combat' in this dissertation instead of the older 'myth of conflict', I do this with the meaning of Foucault's definition of 'struggle':

Every power relationship implies, at least in potentia, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, or do not finally become confused. Each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal. A relationship of confrontation reaches its term, its final moment (and the victory of one of the two adversaries), when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions. Through such mechanisms one can direct, in a fairly constant manner and with reasonable certainty, the conduct of others. For a relationship of confrontation, from the moment it is not a struggle to the death, the fixing of a power relationship becomes a target – at one and the same time its fulfilment and its suspension. [...]

Accordingly, every intensification, every extension of power relations to make the insubordinate submit can only result in the limits of power. The latter reaches its final term either in a type of action which reduces the other to total impotence (in which case victory over the adversary replaces the exercise of power) or by a confrontation with those whom one governs and their transformation into adversaries. Which is to say that every strategy of confrontation dreams of becoming a relationship of power, and every relationship of power leans toward the idea that, if it follows its own line of development and comes up against direct confrontation, it may become the winning strategy. In effect, between a relationship of power and a strategy of struggle there is a reciprocal appeal, a perpetual linking and a perpetual reversal. At every moment the relationship of power may become a confrontation between two adversaries. Equally, the relationship between adversaries in society may, at every moment, give place to the putting into operation of mechanisms of power.⁴⁹⁸

The description of struggle as a strategy of power relationships is fitting insofar as

⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, I disagree with him where he finds Watson's discussion to be correct, i.e. that the Combat Myth is not a feature of the Red Sea and Jordan traditions. While the traditions absolutely do not directly borrow from NWS combat myths, the tradition is vital to the understanding of the HB traditions. I also freely admit that if Watson "doggedly" seeks a historical or naturalistic explanation for the texts – and Batto himself seeks a mythological one – then I myself doggedly pursue a socio-political explanation for the textual traditions.

⁴⁹⁶ So Baker 2006, 79. See also V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* [Austin: UP, 1968].

⁴⁹⁷ It might befit e.g. the Hittite Illuyanka stories, for example, discussed by Gilan 2013. According to him, the focus of the dragonslayer myths was in the prevention of a catastrophe by the hero; this is not a feature of the Baal myths. There are several types that might be a fit for the Combat Myth in the Baal Cycle, such as the Man Kills (Injures) Ogre (1115–1144) type or one of the 'Contest' types. It is difficult, however, to force the narrative into one type when we are missing so many of the particulars.

⁴⁹⁸ Foucault 1982, 794.

the Combat Myth is, in essence, a myth of power. If the idea of combat differs from the idea of struggle, then it is by the ritualistic fashion in which struggle is conducted in combat.

As pertains to the nature of myths, McDowell has offered six definitions for myth, defining it as: 1) a cosmogonic narrative concerned with the origins of things, 2) a sacred narrative connected with rituals, 3) a narrative which is formative or reflective of social order or values within a society, 4) a narrative representing particular epistemologies of nature and the organization of human thought, 5) narratives that employ heroic or divine characters to mediate and reconcile inherent and troubling dualities or to establish patterns of life, or 6) counter-factual narratives which feature actors and actions confounding the conventions of routine experience.⁴⁹⁹ In the research of the ANE “Conflict” myths, it is usually in the first or second of these categories that the myth of the Baal Cycle is placed. In this dissertation I examine the Combat Myth as a part of the third type of myth, a narrative formative of social order and social mores within a society.

Narratology, especially the poetics of narrative, also offers a useful approach for analysing and comparing mythological narratives in a systematic fashion.⁵⁰⁰ Poetics of narrative demands focus on the topics of narration, plot and structure, characters, dialogue, and points of view. Using such methods is crucial especially in light of the tendency (pointed out by Smith) of the comparative studies of Ugaritic and Biblical texts to focus on linguistic rather than literary inquiries, due to the ideological climate in Biblical studies in the Post-War period.⁵⁰¹ Due to the fragmentary state of the Ugaritic textual material, this type of tool may be useful in determining the narrative focus and the broad arc of the stories. But the results of this kind of investigation may be tentative at best, for even the portions of the text which have been fully preserved for us (which is not always the case), the translation of each word and term is fraught with uncertainty. Narrative poetics posits questions for the text: Who is the narrator of the text?⁵⁰² How are the events of the text connected?⁵⁰³ How are characters presented?⁵⁰⁴

⁴⁹⁹ McDowell 1998, 80.

⁵⁰⁰ The narratological structure of dragonslayer myths of central Anatolia was studied by Gilan 2013. According to him, they follow a “relatively constant” structure, but could be used to convey different meanings.

⁵⁰¹ Smith 2002a, 19.

⁵⁰² The text has a third-person omniscient narrator, possibly the voice of the scribe Ilumilku.

⁵⁰³ Because the beginning and the end of most columns are missing in the first and the second

What points of view can be detected?⁵⁰⁵ Who speaks to whom in the dialogue? These types of questions function as tools of systematisation.

According to Aristotle, plot is the arrangement of incidents, characters are what determine the quality of the agents. Characterization reveals *choices*; it reveals what characters choose in situations where choice is not obvious. Every tragedy has six constituent parts: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song. The list is, according to Aristotle, exhaustive, and all poets employ these elements in all drama (*Poetics* 1450a:1–b). Tragedy (i.e. narrative) is not representation of the qualities of character but of some *action*, characters are only included for the sake of action. It is the end at which the narrative aims that is of prime importance. A narrative has a beginning (that which is not a necessary consequent of anything else, but after which something else exists or happens as a natural result), a middle (that which follows from something and from which something follows) and an end (that which results inevitably as a natural result from something else but from which nothing further follows). The sequence of events must follow from one another either inevitably or probably.

There are some inferences that can be made using this Aristotelian categorization as regards the Baal Cycle: the narrative focuses on Baal. There exists an action separate from the rest of the tablets in tablets KTU 1.1 and 1.2 of the Baal Cycle, and quite possibly both of these tablets have an action unto

tablet and the order of the columns of the first tablet is contested, it is impossible to determine how the events are connected.

⁵⁰⁴ Baal is the Protagonist of the bulk of the texts in the Baal Cycle. In terms used in Narratology (see Phillips & Hutley 2004), he also bears the role of the Emotional. His Antagonist in the first two tablets is Yamm, and Yamm's messengers are in the role of Tempter (the right hand of the Antagonist). Kothar-wa-Hasis has the role of the Sidekick (Deuteragonist), and he alone also displays characteristics of the Logical (the rational thinker who plans things out). Ashtart is in the role of Sceptic (the sole voice of objection), and Anat is in the role of Mentor (the conscience of the Protagonist), although also displaying characteristics of the Emotional.

It is difficult to assign a role for El based on the texts. As the Protagonist is the character that needs to change, El might be seen as a secondary (or False) Protagonist. As the least sympathetic character (other than the Antagonist), he is also the Tritagonist. Most would cast him in the role of Mentor, but it is difficult to fit him into the role which represents a lesson to be learned by the Protagonist as well as the prevailing side of the thematic argument in the story, based on textual evidence. He might also function as the Catalyst, but it is also difficult to find the place in the narrative where he would facilitate change, unless the interpretation of him as an active participant in the royal adoption scene is correct.

Note that while early Greek drama contained only the roles of Protagonist and Choir, the narrative of the Baal Cycle includes a rich and complex set of characters. It is both understandable and expected that the cast of characters of the epic do not accord perfectly with the cast of Athenian tragedy. Campbell (1949) presented his own set of character archetypes, among which were the Hero (Baal?), the Mentor (Kothar-wa-Hasis?), the Threshold Guardian (El?), the Herald (the envoys of Yamm?), the Shapeshifter (Anat?), the Shadow (Yamm?), and the Trickster. The role of Trickster, as Campbell defined it, as a character that offsets dramatic tension and keeps things in proportion, could be played by multiple characters.

⁵⁰⁵ There are three points of view: Yamm's, Baal's, and that of the gods.

themselves. The action of 1.2 is the battle between Baal and Yamm, which results in Baal's victory and kingship, and thus comprises a self-contained narrative. Baal's attaining of kingship is the end of the narrative, resulting from the succession of incidents in the text. The proclamation of Baal's kingship is the focal point of the narrative, and the whole cast of characters and their actions exist to facilitate this end. The beginning of the narrative is more difficult to determine (it may even have begun *in medias res*), and the beginning is not as vital to the plot as the end. Understanding what the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle actually contain is vitally important in order for any comparisons to be made.

The two features of *EE* which are absent from the Ugaritic text are the creation of the world, humanity, or the generations of the gods; and the act of cleaving of anything in twain (found in Sumerian myths) or the multiplication or emerging of dualities (found in Egyptian myths). On the question of whether the dialectic of chaos and order can be read into the text, I remain sceptical.⁵⁰⁶ Reading the text against the backdrop of this dialectic may be one way of trying to find some coherence in the narrative, attempting to discern its metanarrative, its transpersonal aspects, or its 'deeper meaning',⁵⁰⁷ but it also seems like an anachronistic and etic imposition on the narrative.⁵⁰⁸ Edelman, on the topic of archetypal narratives, writes:

Myths and metaphors permit men to live in a world in which the causes are simple and neat and remedies are apparent. In place of a complicated empirical world, men hold to a relatively few, simple archetypal myths, of which the conspiratorial enemy and the omniscient hero-savior are the central ones. In consequence, people feel assured by guidance, certainty, and trust rather than paralyzed by threat, bewilderment, and unwanted personal responsibility for making judgements.⁵⁰⁹

This is the narrative that we usually read into the Ugaritic text, and it is the narrative we look *for* in the Biblical texts. But if anything, the character of Prince Sea seems to represent established power hierarchies *vis-à-vis* Baal's illegitimate claim to power (Baal is not the son of El, but Yamm has "no wife like the gods", and therefore no progeny), so to cast him in the role of an agent of chaos seems

⁵⁰⁶ While I do not agree with all of the conclusions of Watson 2005, her critical reassessment of the thematic of chaos in the Biblical texts pertaining to the myth of divine battle is an important contribution toward a resolution of the issue.

⁵⁰⁷ Sasson (1998, 455) mentions the concept of *déjà entendu*, the recognition of a familiar pattern, in the context of writing the history of the Mariote King Zimri-Lim, making the events of his life fit into a familiar pattern of story-telling. We all write our narratives to fit familiar patterns and feel more comfortable reading narratives that do fit them, which leads us to accent certain features of paradigms and disregard others.

⁵⁰⁸ See Landsberger 1926 for the concept of "*Eigenbegrifflichkeit*", a self-contained systemic conceptual autonomy found within ancient cultures.

⁵⁰⁹ Edelman 1971, 83.

somewhat contrived.⁵¹⁰ If anyone brings chaos into the court of El, it is Baal, who upon occasion is portrayed almost as a Trickster figure, laughing in the face of convention and expected behaviour.⁵¹¹ So he appears in the narrative.

There seem to be many Jungian archetypes at play in the interpretation of the Baal Cycle (and other ancient myths), and they may not always be made explicit. The archetypes have become ingrained in our mythography following the seminal works of Frazer (1890) and Campbell (1949) in *Comparative Religion*, as well as those of Jung himself. The question is, do they help us understand these ancient myths, or do we supplant the ancient narrative with a more coherent, symbolic metanarrative reflecting our own post-Cartesian (or “modern”) thought? It would seem that the treatment of the Trickster figure in Semiotics would fit well with the narrative of the Baal Cycle: the Trickster is an ambivalent character, inhabiting the liminal and the margins between the sacred and the profane, being a speaker of ancient animal languages and shifter of shapes, existing as a proto-structure in the journey of the Culture Hero (who becomes the slayer of the monsters) to test the limits and boundaries of culture. According to Radin (1956), the Trickster possesses no social or moral values and is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, but through the actions of the Trickster all of our cultural values come into being. Like Baal, he is “constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control”.⁵¹²

Whereas the role of Trickster could be argued for the Hittite Storm-God as well as the Storm-God of the Baal Cycle, in the Nordic/Old Norse/Eddic narratives of the Combat Myth, the Storm-God is certainly not the Trickster figure. The role of the Trickster in Norse poetry was played by Loki, while the storm-god Thor was the Culture Hero (of course, the roles of the divinities in Nordic mythology do not find perfect correspondence in the Ugaritic myth, wherein Baal seems to possess aspects of Loki and Thor both).⁵¹³ While the action of the Trickster brings culture into being, in Radin’s theory he is an agent of chaos

⁵¹⁰ The interpretation of Yamm as the personification of chaos has also been questioned recently by Benz 2013.

⁵¹¹ Sonik made a similar observation of Marduk being the one that exemplified forces of disorder and disarray in the *EE*. Sonik 2013, 23. Also Benz 2013, 138, “Resolving this case of misidentification should cause us to take pause and reconsider the common characterization of Yamm. Is he indeed the personification of the powers of disorder, or does he simply have the capacity to wreak havoc when necessary, much in the same way that Ba’al does when he finds it appropriate?”

⁵¹² Radin 1956, ix.

⁵¹³ On the function of Loki, see von Schnurbein 2000.

(although it bears pointing out that while the Trickster figure Loki is often portrayed as a chaotic force, his actual characterization in Eddic poetry is much more variable on the scale of hero to villain – see e.g. *Lokasenna*, *Þrymskviða* – than the “he expresses enmity, they battle, and then he is defeated” pattern, which is often the extent of the role given to Yamm in the metanarrative of the epic – and the Eddic poetry was not recorded until well into the Christian era). It is much more likely that the characterization of Baal and Yamm were also nuanced and varied in NWS mythology beyond what is apparent from our limited understanding and comprehension of the extant texts, and to force one character to represent Good and the other Evil is to misconstrue ancient thought.

The journey of the actual Culture Hero, on the other hand, consisted of separation or departure (during which the refusal and subsequent acceptance of the call to adventure is an important part), initiation through trials and the receiving of the boon, and an eventual return as the master of two worlds (Campbell 1949). While many of the Culture Hero’s functions could be read into Baal’s narrative (although not to the narrative of Baal-Yamm specifically), this basic structure does not accord with the structure of the Ugaritic myth, so far as we can interpret it. Archetypes, archetypal narratives, and metanarratives can be read into ancient texts, but how well do they accord with the actual, extant texts? Do they inform our reading of the texts, or do they dictate them? The details of the ancient narratives seem often to be at least as obfuscated as they are clarified by these metanarratives in research.

Of course, one can claim that the vast and boundless sea *symbolizes* chaos or primal disorder – a concept for which, it must be said, there exists no word in the Ugaritic language to our knowledge, and therefore cannot be an *emic* concept to the culture⁵¹⁴ – but how the sea should symbolize chaos more than the raging thunderstorm is a question for which I have yet to find an answer.⁵¹⁵ Svärd expounds the view that the beliefs and activities of ancient individuals (and one

⁵¹⁴ *Emic* (meaningful to the actor, intracultural) and *etic* (meaningful to the observer, extracultural) are categories from the field of Anthropology, which have found increasing use also in the study of the ancient world. Marvin 1976.

⁵¹⁵ The sea is symbolically complex, to be sure. It is a destructive force while at the same time being necessary for the existence of life on this planet. The sea drowns merchants and sailors, but it also carries them on its back from port to port. The element of water is shapeless and its waveform finds association in the serpent, a similarly complicated symbol. See e.g. Gilan 2013, 98. The sea, in all its ambivalence, is a very poetic element, and it is no wonder that it has inspired poets since the dawn of time. But such notions are too general to be of use as analytical tools, and it bears repeating that there is nothing beyond the name to connect Yamm to the sea.

might add, peoples) ought to be understood in terms of the culture of the individual. The validity of concepts, theories, and methodologies ought to be evaluated from inside the target culture.⁵¹⁶

While it may be impossible to completely detach oneself from one's preconceived notions, it is still important to be aware of the frameworks and conceptions that we bring to the ancient texts. Müller suggested that because ancient Semitic languages did not contain "distinct terms" for natural phenomena (which would have separated them from cultural phenomena), the people would have observed a dichotomy between order and chaos in place of natural and cultural spheres.⁵¹⁷ It is somewhat unclear what Müller intends by "terms for 'nature'", but since terms for chaos and order are likewise missing from the ancient Semitic vocabulary, it would merely be to replace one exogenic category of thought with another.

One must also contend with the insistence of bringing chaos into the myth, viewing chaos as an integral part of the myth of combat, coming from the interpretation of the battle as a creation battle, a battle resulting in the creation of the world. If one reads the myth as taking place at the dawn of time with an organized, differentiated world resulting from the battle of divine beings, then viewing the battle through the prism of the chaos-order dialectic is quite natural. But as many have pointed out, creation is not a part of the NWS myth in any of the textual traditions at our disposal – save the late Biblical examples which have been heavily influenced by the hybrid Babylonian form of the myth. In fact, creation does not seem to be an integral aspect of myths of combat in general.⁵¹⁸ And as the aspect of creation seems to feature a secondary development in the myth, insisting that chaos is an integral part of the interpretation of the core myth is untenable. The core myth is not the conquest of chaos. It is conquest, attaining a position of domination.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ Svärd 2015, 126.

⁵¹⁷ Müller 2014, 257.

⁵¹⁸ Only *EE* and *LUGAL-E* feature creation from the corpse of the enemy. See Lambert 1986.

⁵¹⁹ Foucault 1981, 789: "Is this to say that one must seek the character proper to power relations in the violence which must have been its primitive form, its permanent secret, and its last resources, that which in the final analysis appears as its real nature when it is forced to throw aside its mask and to show itself as it really is? [...] A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities. [...] In itself the exercise of power is not violence; nor is it a consent which, implicitly, is renewable. It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting

The focus of the Ugaritic myth is on attaining kingship, fighting for and winning a position of dominance. The establishing of order, or the building of palaces, or creating the world, or sacred marriages, or the cycle of fertility – and whatever else that we may or do or have read into the texts – are extraneous to the core myth. Order was not established by the defeat of Yamm, but the enthronement of the Storm-God was, explicitly. There is nothing particularly chaotic about wanting to subjugate one's enemy and build oneself a palace, both of which were aspirations of Yamm, and both of which were feats that Baal succeeded at.⁵²⁰ These were not symbols of uncreation, and the difference between the gods is that one succeeded where the other failed.

I am also uncertain how well the role of *defender* and *protector* of the world from chaotic powers, a role ascribed to the Storm-God (e.g. by Müller),⁵²¹ can actually be organically read from the ancient texts. It may be possible to entertain native categories for the characters of the myth that could have sprung from the culture of the ancient Semitic peoples, such as victor and victim or conqueror and conquered, the wielders of power and those upon whom it is visited, but we must have care in treating these as questions we *inquire about* the texts rather than as answers we *impose upon* them.⁵²² The dialectic of chaos and order is an imposition on the text (as are those of good and evil/bad, protagonist and antagonist, hero and villain, active and passive). Examining the characters of the Baal Cycle, the roles of many of the principal actors seem to bleed from one category to the other, suggesting that such categories are not emic to the culture that used and transmitted these texts. This dichotomizing interpretation may well be valid, but it is much too broad to be of any use as a comparative tool. This is not to claim that my own view is somehow impartial and that this study concerns only interpretations that arise organically from the texts. This examination intends to offer a critical appraisal of the existing paradigm.⁵²³

subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions”.

⁵²⁰ Benz (2013, 138) also submitted that if Baal and Yamm are to be seen as two candidates of equal standing vying against one another to fill the role of king of the assembled gods, then the narrative is not truly representative of a *Chaoskampf*. This conclusion is naturally dependent on one's definition of *Chaoskampf* and whether one views chaos and order as being of equal standing, but I agree that the Baal Cycle is a poor example of *Chaoskampf*, in that the contestants are essentially the same: both represent chaos and both represent order.

⁵²¹ Müller 2014, 258. It must be stated that he does this with the proverbial grain of salt.

⁵²² Foucault 1982, 795: “It can certainly happen that the fact of domination may only be the transcription of a mechanism of power resulting from confrontation and its consequences”.

⁵²³ Svärd (2015, 126) pointed out that objective and impartial research is virtually non-existent in

The fact that the foundation for the study of Ugaritic texts was laid during and after the Second World War has doubtless also affected the reading of these texts. In his article *Los orígenes de la ugaritología en Alemania y sus relaciones co el nazismo* (2014), J. Vidal discussed the effects of the intellectual climate of the 1930s and 1940s on the founding of the discipline, and how many of the founding fathers of the Ugaritic studies were found the roles of victims (A. Goetze, F. Rosenthal), opponents (K. Galling, O. Eissfeldt), and collaborators (A. Jirku, J. Hempel, E. Forrer) to the German National Socialist regime. Especially pertinent was the role of Jirku (whom Vidal presents in the role of sympathizer), who offered the first translations of the Ugaritic myths into the German language, and upon whose readings of the texts many of the later translations were based.⁵²⁴ While Vidal does not discuss the effect of the intellectual climate of the era on the translations or the textual readings themselves, it is difficult not to note the attention paid by the Pre- and Post War German scholars to the dialectic of chaos and order, regardless of their position *vis-à-vis* the Third Reich. Regardless of the affiliations of the scholars during the war, the fact that the initial readings of the texts were made in an intellectual climate profoundly affected by the war must be recognized and our readings of the texts critically re-evaluated with this in mind. As Batto pointed out, the history of the scholarship pertaining to the myth has been controversial.⁵²⁵

Battle is not the central focus of the text; the motif of battle merely exists to *facilitate* the central theme of the myth: Baal's kingship. Furthermore, it invokes abstract and etic categories which may have meant very little to the people for whom the narrative was still a living myth, partly passed down by generations past and partly inspired by the *Realpolitik* of the world of its composer(s).⁵²⁶ Shalmaneser did not battle the forces of Chaos, but his actual

the framework of the Humanities and that the refusal to acknowledge the theoretical foundations of one's own work tends to distort the results.

⁵²⁴ Tugendhaft 2013 also discussed the early 20th century historical context and its effects on the reading of the myths. The topic was already touched upon by Sasson 1981, who discussed the effect of the fusion of the Hohenzollernian states into a German nation on the historical reconstructions of the era, searching the past for "prognostications on the rise of the nation state". It is difficult not to see the German Bund in our reading of the HB texts.

⁵²⁵ Batto 2013, 218. He referred chiefly to the tendency of one side of scholarship to see references to the myth in the HB willy-nilly, while the other side refuses to admit that there are any references at all. This is not to suggest that reasonable arguments are necessarily to be found on the middle ground, that being a case of *argumentum ad temperantiam*.

⁵²⁶ While Wyatt (1986, 139) was of the mind that the Baal Cycle came from the hand of Ilumilku, he also recognizes that the work of the scribe was "largely redactional, shaping traditional forms into new narrative".

adversaries. Order was not established by the defeat of Yamm, but the kingship and the enthronement of the Storm-God. It is telling that the English Enlightenment philosopher Thomas Hobbes named the state-as-people ‘Leviathan’ in his treatise on legitimate government, somehow recognizing the (Joban) myth as a metaphor for political control with no knowledge of extra-Biblical myths of divine combat. There are two things which every monarch must necessarily assert control over and dominate: his borders and his own people.⁵²⁷

I will conclude this section on Methods by mentioning the concept of the ‘**multiplicity of answers**’, discussed by Frankfort with regard to ancient Egyptian thought, wherein a single concept could be correlated with several natural phenomena. On our inability to fully understand ancient thought, he writes:

such quasi-conflicting images, whether encountered in paintings or in texts should not be dismissed in the usual derogatory manner. They display a meaningful inconsistency, and not poverty but superabundance of imagination. If we see in them failures, proof of the Egyptians’ inability to achieve intellectual synthesis, we simply misconstrue their purpose. The Egyptians exalted their gods by dwelling in the infinite complexity of divine power. The hymns and designs must be read as the reiterated statement: “This also can truly be said of thee”.⁵²⁸

We find this same multiplicity of answers with regard to the traditions of the Combat Myth, which is only natural given the longevity of the narrative. What this indicates with regard to ancient myths in general, and on the topic of the Combat Myth within the scope of this dissertation in particular, is that looking for one single interpretation for a myth may be an exercise in futility, and that theories which can organically encompass multiple explanations and allow for a multiplicity of answers may begin to approximate the ancients’ understanding of these myths. I will begin my examination of the texts with the Amorite witnesses.

⁵²⁷ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (London: 1651).

⁵²⁸ Frankfort 1948, 19–20.

4. The Weapons with which I Attacked the Sea: The Sea of Combat Myth at Mari

4.1 The Amorite Myth of Divine Combat

I begin my examination of the Amorite witnesses to the Combat Myth by discussing the earliest textual witnesses to the NWS tradition. It was Wyatt who suggested that both the NWS myth featuring Yamm and the Babylonian myth with Tiamat derive from an Amorite myth of the weather-god Tishpak's battle with a dragon. For him, they were both merely local variations of the same basic myth.⁵²⁹ Tishpak, the storm-god of the Amorite city of Eshnunna,⁵³⁰ would later become associated with Enlil, Marduk, Baal, and finally Yahweh.⁵³¹ While I broadly agree with Wyatt, at least on the "putative" (which I would amend to 'apparent') Amorite origin of the myth,⁵³² I also think it is important to emphasize the Sea as the name of the enemy of the Storm-God in the Amorite tradition, which is all the more significant due to the inland habitat of the Amorite peoples.⁵³³ It is specifically the sea that the Storm-God had defeated on behalf of the king of Mari, and not any other kind of creature found in other myths of divine combat from other areas.

The text CT 13.33–34,⁵³⁴ possibly originating in the Amorite city of Eshnunna, features the weather-god Tishpak's defeat of a serpent.⁵³⁵ The myth,

⁵²⁹ Wyatt 2001, 99. Lewis (1996, 28) calls the myth of Tishpak a "Mesopotamian" myth, which he describes as older than the "West Semitic developments of the combat myth" like the ones from Judah. The Amorite myth from Eshnunna, while written in Akkadian, is a "West Semitic" myth.

⁵³⁰ Modern Tell Asmar in Iraq.

⁵³¹ Frankfort 1978, 289; Durand 1993; Bordreuil & Pardee 1993; Lewis 1996; Wyatt 2002, 35; 2003, 148. As a point of interest, Tishpak was not only the king of the gods for the Eshnunakeans, he was the king of the city. See Wiggermann 1989, 199: "the kingship that is offered here to the victor is certainly not that over the gods, but that over the nation he saves from peril". Tishpak was also well known in Mari. ARMT XXVI:196 is an interesting text in which a prophet records the storm-god Dagan's summoning of Tishpak before him for judgement. This type of language could indicate that the names of the gods of cities were also used to refer to the kings of these cities.

⁵³² Tugendhaft 2013, 192: "Scholarly opinion has accordingly shifted toward identifying an Amorite origin for the mythic motif of divine combat against the sea".

⁵³³ Albright 1928, 250: "the Amorite settlers were certainly not natural sea-farers". Neither were the later Israelites, it should be added. Jacobsen (1968, 106–107) thought that the meteorological conditions in the myth suggest that its origins had to be on the coast, which is a natural, albeit in light of the evidence erroneous, conclusion. Because the oldest witnesses to the myth come from the desert, the question that needs asking is why this should be.

⁵³⁴ CT here refers to L. W. King's *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets* (British Museum: 1901), not to be confused with the Coffin Texts referred in Chapter 6. Lambert uses the designation Rm 282.

⁵³⁵ See Lambert 2013, 363 for bibliography and editions. Also Wiggermann 1989; 117–133; Horowitz 1996, 32.

much of which is missing, seems to concern the instalment of the god Tishpak as the king of Eshnunna after his defeat of a monstrous foe.⁵³⁶ Lewis (1996) is right in admonishing Biblical scholars for their refusal to engage with the text.⁵³⁷ In Lambert's interpretation, Enlil orders the Sea to produce a monster to exterminate humanity. Lambert also viewed the establishment of kingship as the purpose of the myth, ending a period of lawlessness before the creation of social institutions.⁵³⁸ The text seems to contain motifs which are familiar from the later *EE*, but in a different configuration.⁵³⁹ For example, it is the god Enlil (and not Tiamat) who cannot sleep due to the din of mankind, and the hero Tishpak is requested to wear a seal around his neck and to shoot the Labbu-creature,⁵⁴⁰ called the "offspring of the river". The pertinent part of the text considers the length of the serpent (50 leagues long, with a mouth of six cubits and ear-flaps of twelve cubits), which may lend credence to the suggestion that the serpentine figures were associated with or symbolized rivers (discussed in section 5.1.4). The serpentine offspring of the sea (*tam-tu-um-ma* MUŠ [li-li-id]) and "the offspring of the river" (*re-hu-ut* ÍD) may well suggest a flooding river,⁵⁴¹ as does the

⁵³⁶ I am not entirely certain that the traditional interpretation of earthly kingship as a reward for defeating Labbu is textually warranted. Kingship is mentioned twice, on l. 19 and 22, and both of the lines break off at the end: *ù LUGAL-ù-ti ip-pu-u[š ...]* and *ù LUGAL-ù-ta e-pu-uš [...]*. The context is "save the broad land ... and exercise kingship...", but it is not mentioned that the kingship to be exercised is necessarily *on* the broad land (*ma-a-tum ra-pa-áš-tum*). Kingship in heaven may have been implicated (and would make an antithetic parallel to the earth of the preceding lines), although admittedly the extant text fails to make mention of this. The locale of Eshnunna is not explicitly mentioned in the text.

⁵³⁷ Contra Lambert 2013, 361, who thinks that it may have garnered too much attention for a text of which no duplicates are known.

⁵³⁸ Lambert 2013, 361. Lambert is not sure that it is Tishpak who defeats the foe: "Tishpak is first asked, but the obverse breaks off as he raises objections. If the plots of the Anzu Epic and Enuma eliš are reliable indications, one may suspect that he refused, and perhaps others after him, until finally a champion came forward. If Tishpak was the dragon-slayer, it could be used as an indication of the source of this story, since Tishpak is the little-known god of Eshnunna". Lambert may be correct that Tishpak, surely an ancient storm-god to the mind of the Neo-Assyrian scribe, would have begun a sequence of implorations for a saviour among the gods. Regardless, the mere name of Tishpak can be used neither to date nor to locate the source of the text, or the text itself.

⁵³⁹ The text CT 13.33–34 is known from a copy in Aššurbanipal's library (see Lewis 1996, 29; Lambert 2013, 361), so its precise dating is impossible. Lambert suggests a date from anywhere between 1800–800 BCE, which suggests that it is older than the *EE* but younger than the earliest examples of the Amorite myth.

⁵⁴⁰ Alternatively *kalbu* or *ribbu*. See Lambert 2013, 362. Lambert objects that *kalbu*, dog, can hardly be used to refer to a creature "50 leagues long". I would like to counter this with a reference to the Ugaritic *klbt ilm*, which I have suggested refers to the *Nahr-al Kalb* river ("Dog River", North of Beirut), which is 30 kilometres long. This is not to suggest that the Lebanese river should have been referred to by the name, but that such a name for a river is not unheard of. Both Labbu and Ribbu have been connected to Biblical monsters (Leviathan and Rahab, respectively). If there is a connection, I should think it would be in the association of the monsters with rivers.

⁵⁴¹ Lambert 2013, 362: "At the killing, the monster's blood flows from the carcass for more than

intended purpose of the monster: it is requested by Enlil to stop the wailing of the people (i.e. to wipe them and the cities off the face of the earth). The monstrous Flood's river nature may be further supported by the interpretation of Enlil's creation of the monster by "drawing it on the sky", an image that seemed to baffle Lambert, but which most likely refers to the gathering of storm clouds.⁵⁴²

The Middle Assyrian text KAR 6/VAT 9443 presents a similar narrative, although the hero of the story is not a storm-god, but Nergal. Lambert described it as a "dragon-slaying story", similar enough to the other text that he wonders whether it is not another recension of the Labbu -story.⁵⁴³ Obv. II 21 tells of a serpent created on the sea (*i-na A.AB.BA ib-ba-ni MUŠ ba-[...]*). The description of the snake is reminiscent of the Labbu-text.⁵⁴⁴ On l. 22–25, it is described as being 60 leagues long, 30 leagues high, having eyelids of half a league, and having something of twenty leagues that moves (possibly its mouth, tongue, or tail). In regard to the idea that rivers were called serpents, the serpent of the text is clearly described as a flash flood (l. 26–29): "It has eaten the fish, the creatures of [the sea]; it has eaten the birds, the creatures of [the heavens]; [it has eate]n the asses, creature[s of the steppe]; it has eaten the black heads of the peoples...".

In the text, Nergal is asked to kill the serpent, but the text breaks off before any action takes place. As with the Labbu-text, Nergal may not have been the final champion of the gods, as he is merely one of Aruru's 66 sons asked to perform the job. Lambert also submitted that Nergal was often understood as "another form" of Ninurta, the "traditional dragon-slayer of Sumer". He believed that characteristics of Ninurta were specifically adopted and adapted to the character of Marduk in *EE*, and he went so far as to describe Marduk as Ninurta *redivivus*.⁵⁴⁵ The relationship between Ninurta and kingship has been studied

three years". This is three years, three months, a day and a night, to be exact. Note also that both Enlil and the Sea are portrayed as the begetters of the monster, again suggesting that it is a flooding river.

⁵⁴² Lambert 2013, 361. An alternative explanation for the drawing of the monster in the sky could refer to constellations, but in the context of the story, the storm clouds and the sea creating the flood serpent (the over-flowing river) together makes more sense.

⁵⁴³ Lambert 2013, 384. He dates it to 1200–1100 BCE, which would make it slightly older than *EE* and younger than the Baal Cycle.

⁵⁴⁴ Lambert 2013, 384–385: "The description of the monstrous serpent bears a general likeness to that of Labbu, and some sort of connection is certain. However, this could be nothing more than a dependence on a common tradition for a description of a monstrous serpent".

⁵⁴⁵ There is only one column of text preserved, but there appears to have been 4–6 columns to the story. He also suggests that since Ninurta was the slayer of the dragon in Sumerian stories and Sumerian stories are older, "the story is obviously in an old tradition even if the formulation was relatively recent". Lambert 2013, 384–385. Since Ninurta is not actually mentioned in the text, I am not sure that the antiquity of the tradition can be established, but from the timing of

thoroughly by Annus.⁵⁴⁶ Although I view the origin of the myth in the mythicized but ultimately historical character of Sargon, there is nothing to suggest that mythology of Ninurta could not have been a component in the forging of this political myth.

Another text (TA 33, 15),⁵⁴⁷ held by Wyatt as *the* oldest text pertaining to the tradition,⁵⁴⁸ describes Tishpak as the steward of the sea (^dtišpak *a-ba-ar-rak ti-àm-tim*). The text seems indeed to be the oldest text *explicitly* featuring a storm-god, the sea, and possibly even the idea of the subjugation of the sea by the Storm-God. The text of MAD I, 192/TA 33, 15 reads:

<i>a-ba-ra-ak</i>	Steward
<i>ti-àm-tim</i>	of the sea,
<i>ku-ra-tum a-zum ti-bi</i>	Warrior of power, arise!
^d Tišpak <i>a-ba-ra-ak ti-à<m>-t[im]</i> ⁵⁴⁹ <i>é-zum te-bi</i>	Tishpak, steward of the sea,
	powerful one, arise!
<i>i-lum LUGAL.AN</i>	God, the king of heaven...

This text is shorter than the other two, it is incontrovertibly from Eshnunna (where it was discovered), and it is physically and most likely compositionally the older of the texts. While it has been connected with the Combat Myth, most famously by Wyatt,⁵⁵⁰ the text is too short and ambiguous to conclude this with any certainty. A combat may be *implied* by the text, and it is explicitly connected to kingship, but on its own the text tells us very little.⁵⁵¹ In his discussion of the Eshnunnaean text, Schwemer suggested that the text, which he viewed as an iteration of the Labbu-myth, was the earliest example of a myth originating in the Eastern Mediterranean which became mixed with Ninurta traditions,⁵⁵² in spite of

the text we can assume that either this tradition or traditions similar to it were woven into the making of the *EE*.

⁵⁴⁶ See Annus (2002), pp. 9–50 deal with kingship and pp. 51–108 deal with Ninurta’s role in royal ideology.

⁵⁴⁷ Tell Asmar, 1933 excavations. The text is sometimes designated as MAD 1, 192, but the edition of the Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary (Gelb 1952) does not feature the text, instead merely assigning it a number and remarking that the tablet in question is a school text. Westenholz may have been the first to publish it in *Old Akkadian School Texts*, which features a line drawing of the tablet. Westenholz (1977, 102) interpreted the sea in the tablet as Tiamat, probably due to Lambert’s influence, whose edition of the *EE* was then underway.

⁵⁴⁸ Wyatt 2001, 99; 2005, 152–153. This was already suggested by Durand 1993, 143.

⁵⁴⁹ To my eyes, there is no sign for *àm* in the facsimile. The signs seem to be *ti-a-tim*, the last two of which are badly worn. Perhaps the smaller than average and elevated AN on l. 5 was meant to correct the word on l. 4 (the tablet is a school text, after all). I propose this, because if the AN is a part of the *àm* and not a part of l. 5, then perhaps GIN could have followed LUGAL on the now broken off l. 6, making the text explicitly rather than implicitly about Sargon (LUGAL.GIN), reconstructing the text to read “Tishpak [...] the god of Sargon”, or even explicitly “Tishpak [...] the god, Sargon!”

⁵⁵⁰ Wyatt 2001, 99.

⁵⁵¹ Note however Pritchard 1954, 221 (fig. 691), where there is found a stamp-seal of two gods attacking a seven-headed dragon from the capital city of Eshnunna. Another figure (fig. 692) shows a chthonic serpent deity in front of a shrine, facing worshippers.

⁵⁵² Schwemer 1002, 229.

the earliest witnesses being far removed from the sea. Schwemer also described Tishpak as “Bekämpfer des Meeres und des Meerungeheuers”, even though it is importantly the sea, and *not* sea monsters, that the Storm-God is steward of in the text.

Wyatt dated the myth of Tishpak to the Early Dynastic period in the 24th century BCE,⁵⁵³ being broadly the time of the Akkadian Sargon, which is also where I would search for the origins of the myth – albeit in the figure of Sargon becoming entwined in the mythology of the Storm-God rather than that of any particular localized weather divinity. While Wyatt’s dating may be a little too early, this is the oldest text pertaining to the tradition that I have been able to find. It has been suggested that the myth was a *response* by the Eshnunakeans to the Akkadian invasions, which would mean that Sargon predates the myth and was, in fact, the cause and source of it. Westenholz (1977) interpreted it as a school text of the Sargonic scribal curriculum (and indeed, the reverse of the text appears to contain a list of the names of body parts), which would fit in well with my hypothesis of the early politicization of the myth. I am however not certain that his interpretation of the short exercise as a “hymn to Tishpak” is warranted.⁵⁵⁴

As a text of the Sargonic curriculum, this cannot predate Sargon; his character forms a natural *post quem* regardless of the chronology used. Wyatt believes, however, that the text must have had a longer pre-history.⁵⁵⁵ I disagree, as the sea does not feature in myths of divine combat prior to Sargon, and it is indeed Sargon’s conquest of the sea that appears to have brought the element of the sea into the myth, strictly in keeping with the extant textual witnesses. If one wishes to assert that the myth existed prior to the first textual witnesses then one must provide a *reason* for it to have existed. The weather-god king of Eshnunna as the “steward of the sea”, and the god becoming the king of the city through his defeat of the Labbu may in fact reference Sargon’s personal history *vis-à-vis* Eshnunna. While Eshnunna is not mentioned by name in Sargon’s conquests, one of the later Eshnunna kings, a contemporary of Šamši-Adad, actually took on the moniker of Naram-Sin, indicating at least some degree of reverence for the Sargonic kings in the city.⁵⁵⁶

One interpretation of the text I have yet to come across is that it could be a

⁵⁵³ Wyatt 1998, 884; 2000, 600; 2004, 148.

⁵⁵⁴ Westenholz 1977, 95–110.

⁵⁵⁵ Personal communication.

⁵⁵⁶ Lewy 1966, 36.

portion of a text for a *kispu*-ritual for Sargon, the likes of which were performed in Mari after the death of the monarch (MARI 12803),⁵⁵⁷ honouring the deified dead king and his grandson Naram-Sin.⁵⁵⁸ Calling Sargon Tishpak in Eshnunna makes sense in the context in which ANE kings were called “Enlils” or storm-gods of the cities they conquered. It is possible that the Enlil of each city stood for and symbolized the city itself, as well as the king of that city. Although the Amorite weather-god(s) formed a vital component in the creation of the mythology, the element of the sea was brought into the narrative only through Sargon’s conquests. In this context and during this period in history, “the steward of the sea” can be none other than Sargon. At least for subsequent generations, Sargon had become the Tishpak of Eshnunna through his conquest of the town, just as I suggest that for subsequent generations he was the Enlil of Kish and the Dagan of Tuttul.

By the time of the Amorite kingdoms, this originally Sargonic mythology had been assumed by the Amorites especially. Based on the evidence of the Foundation Inscription, Zimri-Lim’s predecessor Yahdun-Lim appears to have made the same journey as these other Mesopotamian monarchs. But regardless of how later generations viewed the origin of the myth, the earliest extant textual witnesses place its inception in the Sargonic period. I will return to the topic of Sargon in subsequent chapters, as his character is rather central to the formation of the mythology. Regardless of where the origin of the Amorite tradition of the myth is located, the Mariotes were clearly among the early recipients of the tradition, which I will discuss in the following chapters. The main witnesses of the Amorite myth also come from the city of Mari, where the royal inscriptions of the kings display the same language as the inscriptions of the Sargonic kings (discussed in section 6.4).

⁵⁵⁷ Frayne 1993, 231. For example, ARM XII, 3 features a *kispu* for the dead kings.

⁵⁵⁸ Discussed recently by Lange 2015. According to her, the text is dated to the reign of Yasmah-Addu.

4.2 The Campaign of Yahdun-Lim and the Mythological Legitimation of the Mari Monarchy⁵⁵⁹

The archives at Mari contained more than 20,000, tablets as well as inscriptions on objects, written in the Akkadian language. Most of the tablets have been dated to a period of only a few generations, between the reigns of Yahdun-Lim and Zimri-Lim, although the city was inhabited for a millennium prior to their time.⁵⁶⁰ Yahdun-Lim, a king of Mari some generations before his more famous descendant Zimri-Lim, may have been either the father or the grandfather of the later king.⁵⁶¹ Most of what is known of Yahdun-Lim is from letters in the Mari archives from the time of Zimri-Lim, where the name of the older monarch is mentioned several times. The contemporary information we have of Yahdun-Lim comes from the so-called Foundation Inscription of Yahdun-Lim, discovered in the foundation bricks of the temple of Shamash at Mari, and published by Dossin in 1955.⁵⁶² In it, Yahdun-Lim relates the procession of his military campaign to the Mediterranean Sea. According to Malamat, the foundation inscription shows that the Mediterranean was regarded as a “religious-mythological entity” at Mari hundreds of years earlier than previously believed.⁵⁶³

It seems that among the Mesopotamian cultures, the Mariotes among them, making a tour of or a campaign to the Upper sea (the Mediterranean) was a mark of successful kingship from Sargonic times (c. 24th century BCE) onward.⁵⁶⁴ Like his predecessor Yahdun-Lim, Zimri-Lim also seems to have made a tour to the Mediterranean, and there are indications that he even visited the city of Ugarit on his journey. In any case, he certainly made it as far as Aleppo.⁵⁶⁵ In his first article on the topic of the campaigns of Mesopotamian rulers to the Mediterranean,

⁵⁵⁹ Portions of this chapter have been published in Töyräänvuori 2012.

⁵⁶⁰ Pardee & Glass 1984, 88.

⁵⁶¹ According to Malamat 1998, 33, he was “the first true ruler of Mari in the OB period”.

⁵⁶² Dossin 1955, 1–28. Talon (2005b, 100) described foundation inscriptions, meaning inscriptions that were buried in the foundations of public buildings and meant for subsequent rulers to read (which is explicitly stated in many such inscriptions; see Sargon II, *Annals* 463–465), as blending the genres of royal annals and ritual texts. These inscriptions were likely one of the main mediums for the transmission of the tradition.

⁵⁶³ Malamat 1998, 25. The textual evidence is too scant, however, to make any anthropological assertions on how the Mediterranean was regarded in ancient times, as well as whether the understanding was uniform throughout the ages and among different populations.

⁵⁶⁴ In E2.1.1.11, Sargon boasts of having destroyed the city walls (BĀD. BĀD) as far as the shore of the sea (ZĀ A.AB.AB-ka), indicating that he at least claimed to have reached the Mediterranean.

⁵⁶⁵ According to Heimpel (2003, 13), Aleppo controlled the city and port of Ugarit in the OB period. On pp. 54 and 58, he also claims that during his 8th–9th regnal years Zimri-Lim and his father-in-law Yarim-Lim of Halab travelled together to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Malamat writes the following:

It was not until the days of the Assyrian Empire that Mesopotamian rulers began to maintain an almost continuous domination over the Levantine coast and to extract great political and economic advantages therefrom. However, centuries before, the Mediterranean had fired the imagination and challenged the energies of mighty conquerors from the lands of the Twin Rivers who occasionally succeeded in leading their armies to its shores.⁵⁶⁶

Rollinger likewise suggested that the Mesopotamian rulers sought to “reach and subdue” the Mediterranean coastal regions rather than try effect rule or provincialization of these areas. He pointed out that Yahdun-Lim, Aššurnasirpal II, and Shalmaneser III did not actually maintain permanent rule in areas west of the Euphrates, and the same could be said for Sargon.

In Yahdun-Lim’s Foundation Inscription (E4.6.8.2), we find the following (only the pertinent lines 34–37, 41–51, 60–63 have been translated):

<i>ša iš-tu u₄-um ša-at</i>	From the days of old,
<i>a-lam Ma-ri^{ki} DINGIR ib-nu-ú</i>	when god (El/Anu) had built Mari,
<i>LUGAL ma-ma-an wa-ši-ib Ma-ri^{ki}</i>	no king seated in Mari
<i>tī-a-am-ta-am⁵⁶⁷ la ik-šu-du</i>	had reached the sea
...	...
<i>^mJa-ah-du-un-li-im</i>	Yahdun-Lim
<i>DUMU Ia-gi-id-li-im</i>	son of Yaggid-Lim
<i>LUGAL ga-aš-ru-um ri-im šar-ri</i>	the mighty king, the wild ox of kings
<i>i-na le-ù-tim</i>	in irresistible
<i>ù ga-mi-ru-tim</i>	strength
<i>a-na ki-ša-ad ti-a-am-tim</i>	went to the shore of the sea
<i>il-li-ik-ma</i>	he went
<i>a-na A.A.AB.BA ni-qī šar-ru-ti-šú</i>	to the great sea ⁵⁶⁸ the sacrifices of his great
<i>ra-bi-a-am iq-qi</i>	kingship ⁵⁶⁹ he offered
<i>ù ša-bu-šu i-na qé-re-eb A.A.AB.BA</i>	and his troops, in the midst of the great sea
<i>me-e ir-mu-uk</i>	washed themselves with water
...	...
<i>ma-a-tam ša-ti ša ki-ša-ad A.A.AB.B[A]</i>	The land that was on the shore of the great sea
<i>ù-ka-an-ni-iš</i>	he subjugated,
<i>a-na pi-im ù-še-ši-ib-ši</i>	he made it obedient to (the command of his) mouth,
<i>wa-ar-ki-šu ù-ša-li-ik-ši</i>	to follow after him

According to Malamat, this campaign to the Mediterranean, “a high point of Yahdun-Lim’s feats”, was accompanied by cultic ceremonies and the offering

⁵⁶⁶ Malamat 1965, 365.

⁵⁶⁷ *tī-a-am-ta-am* or *ta-am-ta-am*, as opposed to A.AB.BA. According to Malamat, the distinction between the terms is crucial to the understanding of the inscription, as it emphasizes the divine nature of the Mediterranean. The former refers to the sea in a “secular, empirical sense”, and the latter “has a mythological aura to it”. He also remarked on the tempting interpretation of A.AB.BA and the Canaanite-Hebrew *yam* as cognates based on some syllabic spellings of the former, and the fact that the two are expressly associated at Ugarit. Malamat 1965, 367; 1998, 26, 29. There is nothing to suggest that both terms could not simultaneously have had a mythological and a secular “aura” or connotation for the ancient Mesopotamians.

⁵⁶⁸ The translators of these verses have often rendered *tāmtum* with ‘sea’ and A.AB.BA with ‘ocean’ to differentiate between the two forms (Akkadian and Sumerian) used in the inscription. I have opted to translate A.AB.BA as ‘great sea’, as it likely refers to the Mediterranean. See Malamat 1998, 34.

⁵⁶⁹ Malamat (1998, 34) parses the term “great royal sacrifices” and (1965, 376) “a multitude of royal sacrifices”.

of sacrifices to the sea. He suggested that this practice would originally have been “West Semitic”, being Amorite or Canaanite, and only later adopted by the “Mesopotamians”,⁵⁷⁰ a vague term with which he most likely referred to the Sumero-Babylonian culture, as Mariotes were surely as Mesopotamian as any people living along the Euphrates.⁵⁷¹ The later prophecy pertaining to Zimri-Lim was connected with the subjugation of the sea, mentioned in the Foundation Inscription by Malamat.⁵⁷² Therefore, one of the most obvious reasons for bringing the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo to Zimri-Lim (discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter) would have been the staging of a cultic ritual that was similar to the one that had taken place during Yahdun-Lim’s campaign to the Mediterranean coast, recreating the display of power. The washing of the Storm-God’s weapons in the sea in a public ceremony before one’s army would have carried much more political significance viz. the NWS Combat Myth than simply presenting them to the king during a presumed coronation ceremony – assuming that such ceremonies in fact took place.

Malamat associated the Sumerogram A.AB.BA of the Foundation Inscription with the Ugaritic Yamm.⁵⁷³ He interpreted the text as implying that the king’s troops bathed in the Mediterranean in what was “surely a cultic ritual, a sort of baptism”.⁵⁷⁴ Rollinger likewise submitted that a ritual took place on the shore of the Mediterranean (“it is not by circumstance that the ritual is performed at the coast of the sea”), albeit a ritual different from Sargon and Naram-Sin’s.⁵⁷⁵ But Yahdun-Lim’s inscription seems to be using the Sargonic inscriptions

⁵⁷⁰ Malamat 1998, 25, 32, 34. Despite being aware of the Sargonic evidence, Malamat seems to believe that the practice started with Yahdun-Lim.

⁵⁷¹ Budin (2004, 105) likewise calls Mari “a natural melting pot between Mesopotamian and west Semitic cultures”, which I take to mean the NWS and Sumero-Babylonian cultures.

⁵⁷² Malamat 1998, 27. On p. 34 he writes: “The other, recent evidence from Mari, touching on the mythological character of the Mediterranean, is to be found in a letter sent to King Zimri-Lim at Mari (the son of the aforementioned Yahdun-Lim and the last king of OB Mari) by his ambassador to Aleppo in the days of its King Yarim-Lim”.

⁵⁷³ Malamat 1998, 29. Rollinger 2012, 730, on the other hand, saw no cultic character in the verb itself, but submitted that it is the concomitant mention of sacrifices performed that gives the washing a ritual character.

⁵⁷⁴ Malamat 1998, 25.

⁵⁷⁵ Rollinger 2012, 726, 730. He calls it “more outstanding” than the rituals in which the weapon was supposedly washed. According to him, while Yahdun-Lim’s ritual was “slightly different from that of his predecessors and successors, the identity of the location and the similar ideological background makes it highly probable that the king of Mari is also acting according to traditional lines” and that despite differences in the texts, these variations “only betray different perspectives on one and the same performance”. While I agree that there is a shared ideological background connecting these OB examples to Sargon’s precedent, Yahdun-Lim’s inscription seems to suggest that the tradition was still in its *formative period*. It is not until Zimri-Lim that we have evidence of an *established tradition*.

liberally, compared, e.g. with Naram-Sin's inscription E2.1.4.26: "From the time of the creation of mankind, no king among kings had destroyed Armanum and Ebla. By means of his weapons, Nergal opened the way for the mighty Naram-Sin, and gave him Armanum and Ebla, and also Amanus, the Cedar Mountain, and the Upper Sea. By means of the weapon of Dagan, the magnifier of his kingship, the mighty Naram-Sin conquered Armanum and Ebla".⁵⁷⁶ Many of the key terms found in this inscription are also found in later Biblical texts, which I discuss in Chapter 6.

Anachronistic notions of baptism⁵⁷⁷ aside, it is possible that the cleansing of the men did have ritual or cultic dimensions, as the regular washing of soldiers would hardly warrant mention in a royal inscription. But we have no way of knowing what sort of rituals would have been performed, or what they ultimately signified. Malamat submitted that the significance of the act is indicated by the use of the Akkadian word *ramākum*, which, he admits, actually merely denotes washing, but may occasionally take on a ritualistic sense of "cleansing the entire body in water in a ritualistic context".⁵⁷⁸ The noun may carry these connotations, but the verb – which is what we find in the inscription – is seldom used in this fashion. While the washing of the weapon is not mentioned in the Foundation Inscription, Malamat does associate the washing of the troops with the washing of the weapon as an act in which "the purificatory washing is combined with the sacrificial act".⁵⁷⁹ Nevertheless, we simply have no way of knowing what sort of rituals these were and what they signified. Rollinger, for his part, connected the conquering of the mountainous regions by Mesopotamian kings to the ritual of the washing of the weapon in the sea, both symbolizing the conquest of border regions, the edges of the world.⁵⁸⁰

There is a text in the archives of the royal palace connected to Yahdun-Lim that may shed light on the politicization of the divine weapons, through which the

⁵⁷⁶ It should be noted that in the inscription, the conquest of the sea by Naram-Sin, king and god, clearly happens after creation.

⁵⁷⁷ Malamat (1998, 25) likens the cleansing of the men to the *miqveh* of Judaism.

⁵⁷⁸ Malamat 1998, 25. Langdon (1909, xxii) refers to a Babylonian liturgy of baptism called *bit rimki*, "the house of baptism".

⁵⁷⁹ Malamat 1965, 367. Rollinger (2012, 730) suggests that the weapons of the troops may also have been washed or that washing of the weapons of the troops may have been intended rather than the bathing of the soldiers themselves ("including the king as main actor") – although the weapons of the troops are not mentioned in the text of the inscription, or in any other text. This is a fiction that is not based on the text or any comparative evidence. What the other OB texts, especially the Mari letter FM 7 38, do suggest is that if Yahdun-Lim did wash a weapon in the sea, it was the divine weapon of the Storm-God of Aleppo.

⁵⁸⁰ Rollinger 2012, 731.

mythology was transmitted.⁵⁸¹

<i>ia-aḥ-du-un-li-im</i>	Yahdun-Lim
DUMU <i>ia-gi-id-li-im</i>	son of Yaggid-Lim,
LUGAL <i>ma-r^{ki}</i>	king of Mari,
<i>tu-ut-tu-ul^{ki}</i>	Tuttul,
<i>ù ma-at ḥa-na</i>	and the land of Ḥana
LUGAL KAL.GA	the strong king,
<i>ga-me-er GÜ^{id}</i> BURANUN.NA	the controller of the bank(s) of the Euphrates:
^d <i>Da-gan</i>	Dagan
<i>šar-ru-ti ib-bi</i>	my kingship, he proclaimed
^{giš} TUKUL KAL.GA	the strong weapon
<i>mu-ša-am-qi-it</i>	the feller
LUGAL.MEŠ <i>na-ki-ri-ia</i>	of the kings, my enemies,
<i>id-di-nam</i>	he gave me.

While the weapons are not explicitly named as the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo, they are the weapons of Dagan, the Storm-God that was the patron of the Mariote monarchy. Like in the case of Zimri-Lim (to be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter), the king claims that he was given the weapons by the Storm-God. The proclamation of kingship and the giving of the weapons are mentioned in conjunction, but whether we are to understand them as a simultaneous ceremonial act would again lead us into a place of conjecture.⁵⁸² While the text does not prove that the *same* weapons were held by both kings, it does allow us conclude that the inscriptions of the previous king must have had an influence on the subsequent Mariote royal ideology.

While Malamat seems to indicate the existence of a ritual involving various kings by the shore of the Mediterranean, he does not elaborate on what the ritual may have entailed. Similarly, Rollinger assumes that a ritual took place, and he submits that “the intrinsic character of the ritual” gained import due to its location, as well as the shared ideological background.⁵⁸³ In the various royal inscriptions, many of which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6, we find hints or mentions of the following:

- a) the washing of a weapon / weapons in the sea
- b) the washing of the king / king’s troops in the sea
- c) sacrifices made at the shore of the sea / to the sea
- d) (implied symbolic conquering of the sea)

It must be stressed that in no single text do we find all of the conditions mentioned together (see chart in section 6.4.3). The only common factor seems to be that the king reached the sea coast or, in other words, conquered the sea. It is easy to

⁵⁸¹ RIME 4.6.8.1:1–13.

⁵⁸² The inscription continues with the king’s description of how he defeated the leaders of Ḥana, which would suggest that the weapon had more to do with the military campaign and his prowess at war than with the proclamation of kingship.

⁵⁸³ Rollinger 2012, 370.

accord these few obscure references too much religious or ritual significance, but it is also true that ritual or religious ceremonies were not as far removed from regular, secular conduct in the Bronze Age as they perhaps are today.

While it is usually assumed that the weapons were used in a coronation ceremony, another use for divine weapons was as a standard carried before the troops on military campaigns, which is what Zimri-Lim's predecessor may have used them for. Based on the OB evidence, the settling of a dispute, the rendering of judgement, or the resolving of a conflict would appear to have been more likely reasons for the transporting of the weapons to Mari than an *unprecedented* symbolic coronation ceremony. It is well known that administering justice was the king's duty and prerogative in the OB period, and most of the texts that mention divine weapons have judicial contexts. I wish to submit, however, that even more probable for the transportation of the weapons was their use in sacralising Yahdun-Lim's and Zimri-Lim's military undertakings, based on the precedent set by the earlier Mari monarch during his campaign.

While the sea mentioned in the Foundation Inscription has often been interpreted as either a god of the sea⁵⁸⁴ or some kind of semi-divine monster, it should be noted that in this text the word for 'sea' does not feature the divine determinative.⁵⁸⁵ There is also little that hints at an anthropomorphic conception of the sea. From the text alone, it is impossible to glean information on whether the sea was understood as a purely physical body of water, a monstrous divine entity, or some kind of combination of the two. In spite of Malamat's proposition, there is nothing in the Sargonic inscriptions, nor in the OB witnesses to the tradition, to suggest that the sea was at this time considered anything other than the sea. Without further evidence on how the sea was conceived of at Aleppo and at Mari, it is impossible to know for certain how the sea is understood in the texts.

One question that warrants asking in this context is *why* reaching the sea was so important to this Mari king as to require a ritualistic act at its shore, and whether there was a reason for it other than the purely political desire for expansion. Malamat pointed out that in addition to military expeditions, strong political and economic contacts between Mari and the Eastern Mediterranean areas are reflected in the Mari documents. He also noted that the international

⁵⁸⁴ See Malamat 1998, 34.

⁵⁸⁵ The sea was not viewed as a divinity, a divine character, in the Mesopotamian area. Sonik 2013, 15.

situation of the OB period was favourable toward a westward expansion for Assyria and Mari, as Egypt's influence was on the decline from the end of the 12th dynasty onward.⁵⁸⁶

For Rollinger, the instability of the conquest of the Mediterranean regions was the reason for the performance of the rituals on its shore. I posit that the performance of the ritual and the conquests or campaigns themselves were both means to legitimize monarchic rule, especially in the eyes of the king's army, the only portion of the population actually present during the performance of the act. Rollinger touches upon the concept: "These ritual acts were, especially from a modern point of view, also a part of a propagandistic endeavour to show to everybody the king's capacities".⁵⁸⁷ But the conquest of the sea on behalf of the Storm-God not only showed the king's capacities, it *also* legitimized his divine right to govern. A similar concept can still be found in the motto of the British monarchs: *Dieu et mon droit*.⁵⁸⁸ I will discuss the Sargonic foundation for the concept in section 6.4.2.1.

In addition to Yahdun-Lim, a contemporary of his seems also to have accomplished the same feat. There are records of the Assyrian king Šamši-Adad, mentioned by name in FM 7 38, making a campaign to the west, apparently following Yahdun-Lim's example.⁵⁸⁹ Šamši-Adad was of Amorite extraction, a point that caused later Assyrian rulers to scorn him and his reverence to Enlil.⁵⁹⁰ Both kings, it would seem, were tapping into the same Sargonic well of royal legitimation. There is, in fact, a connection between Šamši-Adad and the Sargonic kings in the text A.0.39.2, in which Šamši-Adad records the rebuilding of a shrine originally built by Man-Ištušu, son of Sargon, whose inscriptions he had found and restored during the reconstruction, depositing his own inscription next to that of the earlier king.⁵⁹¹ This presents us with a direct textual link between the

⁵⁸⁶ Malamat 1965, 373.

⁵⁸⁷ Rollinger 2012, 731.

⁵⁸⁸ See Burgess 1992.

⁵⁸⁹ Malamat 1965, 370–372; Malamat 1998, 26.

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. A.0.40.1001. In literature the king is often called Assyrian. Indeed, he seems to have managed to conquer the Assyrian heartland and he did call himself the king of Assyria, but he seems to have been of North Syrian ancestry and hence the descriptor 'Amorite king' is not out of place.

⁵⁹¹ A.0.39.2:9–13 *bi-tim la-bi-ri ša ma-an-iš-ti-šu DUMU šar-ru-ki-in LUGAL a-kà-dē^{ki} i-pu-šu*. L. ii 21–25: *na-re-e ma-an-iš-ti-šu ù te-em-me-ni-šu ú(?)*-[na]-ak-ki-ru-ma [ana KI]-šu-nu-ma [la ZI]-šu-nu-ti. Shalmaneser I, who fashioned himself as the "crusher of the great dragon of conflict", also claims to have anointed with oil the monumental inscriptions of his ancestors and returned them to their holy places (A.0.77.1), witnessing that the older inscriptions were in the use of monarchs later on.

Sargonic rulers and the Amorite kings of the OB period.

According to Malamat, Šamši-Adad's campaign took place only a few years after Yahdun-Lim's, having likely been influenced by the prior campaign. Šamši-Adad undertook the journey only after conquering Mari, and Malamat suggests that he had a hand in the rebellion during which Yahdun-Lim was deposed. Thus, it is entirely possible that a campaign was conducted as an act of legitimation for Šamši-Adad's newfound kingship.⁵⁹² Šamši-Adad's campaign warranted, however, only a brief mention in his Enlil temple inscription in the city of Assur (RIME 1.0.39.1:81–87 / IAK VIII Rs. 4, 12–18), which reads: *šū-mi ra-bi-e-im ù na-ri-ia i-na ma-a-at la-ab-a-an^{ki} i-na a-aḥ A.AB.BA ra-bi-i-tim lu-ú áš-ku-un*, “My great name and my stele in the land of Laban⁵⁹³ on the shore of the Great Sea surely I placed”.⁵⁹⁴

Luckenbill, commenting on the inscription, writes:

This [reaching the Mediterranean] had been the goal of the great conquerors since Sargon, and perhaps Lugal-zage-si, as it was of the great successors of Šamši-Adad. The campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser I, Aššur-nasir-pal, and the kings of the later Assyrian empire regularly proceeded along the semi-circular curve from Assur, Calah or Nineveh, northward into the mountains of the “upper country,” Nairi-Urartu, then westward through Kummuh to Musri and the other Hatti-lands, across the Euphrates at Karkamish and thence to the Mediterranean and the Syrian coast. Šamši-Adad probably followed the same course.⁵⁹⁵

What is notable about Luckenbill's reconstruction of the route of the campaigns is that it also involves the crossing of the river, a feature of many of the later texts. Rollinger has largely ignored Šamši-Adad's campaign, identifying Yahdun-Lim of Mari as the first monarch to have followed Sargon's campaign,⁵⁹⁶ even though neither Šamši-Adad nor Yahdun-Lim washed their weapons in the sea like Sargon and Naram-Sin claimed to have done (see section 6.4.2). It may even be called into question whether the claims of the Assyrian monarch had any historical basis whatsoever.

The recycling of Sargonic royal inscriptions by the OB kings started with Yahdun-Lim, whose example was taken over by Šamši-Adad and subsequently followed by his contemporaries, the Mariote kings. However, it seems plausible

⁵⁹² Malamat 1998, 26.

⁵⁹³ Lebanon according to Malamat 1998, 26. Luckenbill (1912, 170) suggested that the KI-determinative means that Laban was a city. The *ma-a-at* preceding the toponym on the other hand might suggest a region rather than a city, which is what the Sumerian term actually denotes as well.

⁵⁹⁴ Since Ebeling (et al. 1926, 23) and Luckenbill (1912, 170) have chosen to render the word for ‘sea’ with *tāmtim* rather than transcribing it syllabically, one can assume that the Sumerian A.AB.BA underlies it.

⁵⁹⁵ Luckenbill 1912, 158–159.

⁵⁹⁶ Rollinger 2012, 726.

that the historic practice of the conquest of the Mediterranean coast would have been mythicized eventually. The myth could well have persisted in the scribal curriculum, and likely also did in oral poetic traditions. Šu-sin, the penultimate king of the Ur III-dynasty (mid-20th c. BCE) described the weapon of the Storm-God, the glow of which frightens the nations from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea,⁵⁹⁷ thus witnessing to the on-going mythologization of the motif.⁵⁹⁸ The kings of the Ur III dynasty are known to have used the figures of Sargon and Naram-Sin to bolster their claim to power, presenting themselves as the successors of the legendary kings.⁵⁹⁹

Rollinger notes that while Yahdun-Lim made his sacrifices to the sea, the Neo-Assyrian kings made their sacrifices by the sea “to my great gods”, by which, according to him, they were referring to “the sea, or the gods represented by this infinite gathering of water in the west who are thought to receive the king’s offering”. According to Rollinger, the different attributions of the sacrifices at Mari and Assur were due to the different traditions of divinities in the kingdoms. He further found it is noticeable that the Neo-Assyrian monarchs did not use the name of the god Aššur as the recipient of the sacrifices.⁶⁰⁰

It is doubtful that the sacrifices were intended *for* the sea, even if the sea had been understood as a “religious-mythological entity” – or at the very least the textual evidence is ambiguous as to the meaning and function of these sacrifices. The sacrifices were more likely intended for the dynastic god(s), the protector(s) of the respective monarchies of these kings, which usually also indicated a warrior deity, and in Syro-Palestinian polities a deity that had attained his kingship specifically by defeating the sea. Aššur, having incorporated many of the older

⁵⁹⁷ BT 4 I 25–37: GIŠTUKUL A-MA-RU / NÍ-GAL MU-ŠUB / Á-AN.KÁR / Á-MÈ / Á-NAM-UR-SAĜ-ĜÁ / NÍ-ME-LÁM-BI / AN-NÉ [ÚS-S]A / ZA-PA-Á[Ĝ-B]I / KI-BAL-A DUL₉-DUL₉-LA / BAL-A-RI / A.AB.BA SIĜ-ĜA-TA / [A.A]B.BA IGI-NIM-MA-ŠÈ / ÍD [x – x – x]. (When Enlil gave to Šu-sin...) the flood weapon that casts fear, the hand of the Ankar-weapon, the hand of battle, the hand of warriorship whose awe-inspiring glow (*melammu*) reaches the heavens, whose roar covers the enemy lands from the Lower sea to the Upper sea, (from?) the river [...]. Notice the word A/Á (encompassing the entire arm) used to describe the weapons of the king.

⁵⁹⁸ A refusal to treat such claims as at least partial tropes leads to difficulties in attempting to reconcile the content of the inscriptions with historical reality or factual geography. Kutscher (1989, 98–99) for example, has to interpret the Upper sea of the inscription referring to Lake Urmia. In light of the ANE tendency to demarcate borders by bodies of water, it is of course possible that Lake Urmia did make up the northern border of Šu-sin’s empire, and it is entirely possible to transplant tropes from one location to another, but the *motivation* for using this type of language in one’s royal inscription belonged to Sargonic precedent and political posturing, not geography.

⁵⁹⁹ Nielsen 2012, 5.

⁶⁰⁰ Rollinger 2012, 370.

storm-gods, was surely among the recipient divinities for these types of sacrifices, albeit the god has not been *predominantly* associated with the Combat Myth in any tradition. The names of the gods may have been different, but their functions were similar, as was the function of the ritual. The kings were not honouring the sea with a ritual of the washing of their weapons because in no textual tradition does the sea present itself as a particularly venerated entity. Based on the textual evidence in the various traditions of the Combat Myth, a conclusion may be drawn that the kings were more likely symbolically *slaying the sea* by dipping their weapons into its waves before their assembled armies, like the Storm-God had slain it before them. It is the background of the Combat Myth that makes the ritual act comprehensible.

It must be noted that there is no reference to the Mediterranean campaign in Yahdun-Lim's year formulas,⁶⁰¹ such as what one might expect for a feat of such magnitude. Yahdun-Lim's inscription does not expressly mention the name of the conquered land or region either, which may be considered a reason to challenge the historicity of the inscription.⁶⁰² It is also worth a remark that, like the Mari oracles, the Foundation Inscription employs a poetic style.⁶⁰³ According to Malamat, the above arguments do not carry sufficient weight to discredit the historicity of the campaign,⁶⁰⁴ but the historicity of the campaigns of the Mesopotamian rulers is not under inquiry in this dissertation, nor is the factual basis of any cultic acts that may or may not have taken place by the Mediterranean Sea.⁶⁰⁵ What is significant is the *representation* of royal acts that we have in the form of these inscriptions. Whether or not Yahdun-Lim's inscription details his actual military campaign to an actual location on the Mediterranean coast, even if what the inscription depicts is a completely fictional account of such a campaign, the function of the inscription is still undoubtedly

⁶⁰¹ Malamat 1965, 369.

⁶⁰² Malamat 1965, 369.

⁶⁰³ Malamat 1998, 33. Although rare, it is not unheard of for Mesopotamian royal inscriptions to employ a poetic style. Cf. A.O.102.17.

⁶⁰⁴ Malamat 1965, 369–370. He writes: "It would be difficult, therefore, to assume that details of this kind are just figments of the imagination, while plagiarism is unthinkable, at least as far as our present information goes, since there is no document of the same or even similar contents that could have served as an archetype for the king's scribes". While this is possible, there would almost certainly have been at the very least oral accounts of Sargon's and Naram-Sin's campaigns circulating in the ANE.

⁶⁰⁵ Talon (2005b, 101) lists a bibliography discussing the historicity of the campaigns of Neo-Assyrian rulers. According to Talon, the accounts of the annals could even have been modified ("rather extensively") during the reigns of the monarchs, especially following events that required revision at later stages of the kings' reigns.

propagandistic. It is not relevant to the present inquiry whether Yahdun-Lim or Zimri-Lim, or indeed Sargon himself, physically made a campaign to the Mediterranean shore, dipped their weapons in the sea, or had their troops wash in the water. What is relevant is that they, and several other Mesopotamian monarchs, presented and portrayed themselves as having done so.⁶⁰⁶

A symbolic journey of this kind, fashioned after a pre-existing model of a propagandistic military campaign, may offer us a reason for Yahdun-Lim and Zimri-Lim to have concerned themselves with the weapons of the Storm-God. In fact, it is known that the younger Zimri-Lim had a close familial relationship with the king of Yamhad, called the “Beloved of Adad” (*na-ra-am* ^dIškur),⁶⁰⁷ who seems to have used this special relationship with the god to exert political influence.⁶⁰⁸ The term Beloved or Beloved of the gods (DEUS-na-ti ^{LITVUS}á-za-mi-sà) was also frequently used in the hieroglyphic Luwian royal inscriptions of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms (e.g. MARAŞ 1, KULULU 4), which were the recipients of the Aleppo traditions. Therefore the simplest explanation for the sending of the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo to Mari territory is that they were symbolic of the patronage of Yarim-Lim of Yamhad that came with them⁶⁰⁹ – which did not necessitate a coronation or enthronement ceremony.

Müller aptly describes the transference of the power of the Storm-God to the Mariote king as the *translatio imperii*, allowing the king to fight his battles with the authority of the Storm-God. But he fails to account for the very real political support from the king of Yamhad that was translated to the junior king, his son-in-law, with the actual physical act of transporting the weapons to his territory.⁶¹⁰ And the most likely function for the weapons that were brought from Aleppo to Mari territory would have been the sanctioning of a military campaign, the promise of divine protection and victory not only from the Storm-God of

⁶⁰⁶ Although Malamat (1965, 366) believed in the historicity of Sargon’s campaign. He even entertained the notion that Sargon and his successors may have ruled the coasts of the Mediterranean and Cyprus, even maintaining a possible commercial relationship with Crete. “In any case, there seems to be no doubt concerning the historicity of the expedition”. He may overstate the evidence.

⁶⁰⁷ E4.33.2.1.

⁶⁰⁸ Schwemer 2001, 211–237. According to him, the king of Yamhad “acted in accordance to the will of Adad”.

⁶⁰⁹ Schwemer 2008a, 163. It is also possible that there was a belief that the patronage of one storm-god could be transferred to another storm-god. Cf. Utu-Hegal’s inscription (E2.13.6.4. 88–89) in which he implores Ishkur: “O Ishkur! The god Enlil has given me a weapon – may you be my ally!”

⁶¹⁰ Müller 2014, 258.

Aleppo, but also (and perhaps more importantly) from the king of Yamhad.⁶¹¹ In the Mariote texts, the transmission of the political ideology of the Combat Myth was physically tied to the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo, which is why I will discuss them in connection with the younger monarch in more detail in the next section.

4.3 Zimri-Lim and the Weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo⁶¹²

In this chapter, I discuss both the symbolic and the actual functions of the divine weapon of the Storm-God mentioned in a letter addressed to King Zimri-Lim of Mari, along with the physical manifestation of the concept in the form of the cultic weapon housed in the temple in the city of Aleppo. I begin by examining the textual evidence for the Storm-God's weapons, both in mythological texts and in administrative documents and letters. An overview of the archaeological and iconographic evidence for the divine weapons follows, focusing especially on the Syrian area and the attributes of the Storm-God of Aleppo. I will also present a few Biblical passages which seem to at least allude to a later use of the motif of the Storm-God and his special weapons, some of which may even have been influenced by the mythology surrounding the weapons of the Aleppan Storm-God.

With regard to the topic of this dissertation, an examination of the weapons of the Storm-God is central for the reason that the symbolic transference of the political ideology of the Amorite kingdoms was *physically tied* to the cultic weapons of the Aleppan temple of the Storm-God. We may expect some traces of this tradition to have survived in the political mythologies of the younger NWS kingdoms which inherited the myth which legitimized the monarchic rule of the Amorite kings. The author submits that a closer examination of the weapons portrayed in various traditions of the Combat Myth is required, as such weapons are referred to in almost all ANE forms of the narrative, and they may indeed function as one of the aspects that can help us detect differences within and between the mythic traditions. Weapons, especially the bow and the sword,⁶¹³ can

⁶¹¹ Holloway (2002, 173) also mentions loyalty oaths taken before the “gods of the king”, and the marching of the divine standard before the army in connection with the “weapons that Aššur gave” the king.

⁶¹² Portions of this chapter have been published in Töyräänvuori 2012.

⁶¹³ But also the scourge, a weapon also associated with Adad in the iconography of the

also be found in connection with the god Yahweh in the texts of the HB.

In recent years, two very thorough syntheses on the textual, iconographic, and archaeological evidence pertaining to storm-gods in the ANE have been published: D. Schwemer's *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen* (2001),⁶¹⁴ which offers a comprehensive study of the textual evidence for the Storm-God outside of the Anatolian area, and A. R. W. Green's *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (2003), which discusses the textual and iconographic evidence for the Storm-God in the areas of Mesopotamia, Syria-Anatolia, and the Eastern Mediterranean, examining the changing role of the Storm-God in these different environments. With regard to the role of Yahweh as one among the ANE storm-gods, R. Müller's *Jahwe als Wettergott: Studien zur althebräischen Kultlyrik anhand ausgewählter Psalmen* (2008) is an invaluable contribution; after this work, the role of Yahweh as a weather-god, especially in Biblical psalms, can scarcely be denied.⁶¹⁵ These titles may be consulted as regards the literary and material evidence for the Storm-God in the ANE; I have made no attempt to recreate these studies in this dissertation, but rather to build upon their foundation. Both Schwemer's and Green's works also touch on the issue of the weapons of the Storm-God,⁶¹⁶ although they do not focus on the topic.

Zimri-Lim's own personal history seems to contain certain parallels with the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, especially with the parts dealing with the conflict between Yamm and Baal. Zimri-Lim, a contemporary and occasional ally of the famous Hammurapi of Babylon, did not have an easy path to kingship. Bonnet & Merlo describe the context in which he came to his kingship as a "struggle for power".⁶¹⁷ It appears that Zimri-Lim was forced to flee to Aleppo following the coup that deposed his predecessor from the throne of Mari (possibly resulting from the assassination of his father), at which point Šamši-Adad took control of

Syrian/North Mesopotamian area. See Müller 2014. Note, however, that the scourge is nowhere indicated as having been one of the weapons held in the temple of Aleppo, and the scourge is not one of the weapons used by the Storm-God in defeating the sea in the NWS iterations of the myth – at least outside of the HB.

⁶¹⁴ Schwemer also wrote a follow-up to this study, which was published in two parts in JANER 7/2 and 8/1 (2008).

⁶¹⁵ Müller 2008, 236. In his book, Müller described the original or ancient ("ursprünglich") god of the Hebrews as a mighty warrior who claimed dominion over the earth and the cosmos by taming the Flood and bringing the rain, and who was at the same time a king who received tribute from the other gods and maintained the ordered world from his palace.

⁶¹⁶ Müller has also touched upon the topic. In particular, his article on the scourge of the weather-god in may be recommended; see Müller 2014.

⁶¹⁷ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 81.

the kingdom. It was only with the help of Yarim-Lim, whose daughter Zimri-Lim had married during his twenty year exile in the Yamhadian court, that he managed to depose Šamši-Adad's son Yasmah-Addu from the throne of Mari.⁶¹⁸

Zimri-Lim then spent the next several years conquering different tribal factions and confederations to consolidate his rule, the quarrelling Bensimalites and Benjaminites being the foremost among them.⁶¹⁹ Zimri-Lim also allied with Hammurapi of Babylon first against Eshnunna and then the Elamites, but their alliance came to an end some time before the destruction of Mari.⁶²⁰ While the characters of the Baal Cycle do not find perfect correspondence with what we know of the historical personages, there is broad similarity in terms of motif. It would be possible to cast Zimri-Lim as Baal, Yasmah-Addu as Yamm, Šibtu as Anat, and either Šamši-Adad or, more likely, Yarim-Lim as El without doing too much injustice to the narrative or the historical facts. This is not to suggest that the Ugaritic myth should necessarily reflect the political situation of the OB period, merely that the *narrative* cannot be used to reliably date the texts.

The worship of divine weapons, mentioned in the important Mariote witness to the Combat Myth from Zimri-Lim's reign, was practised all over the ANE.⁶²¹ These weapons, often forged of precious metals and encrusted with jewels, were viewed especially during the OB period as magical objects imbued with divine power. Several weapons attributed to deities have been discovered in archaeological excavations during the last century. There is indication that from the OB period onward, divine weapons were housed in temples and leased out by the clergy for various purposes. The main uses of divine weapons were for oath-taking and the settling of disputes, serving as agents of divine judgment.⁶²² These tools of symbolic and magical use were likely not meant for actual, physical uses.⁶²³

While special weapons of various different divinities are known

⁶¹⁸ Sasson 1998, 458–459.

⁶¹⁹ He may have been a Benjaminite through his mother and a Bensimalite through his father. Sasson 1998, 458–459.

⁶²⁰ Sasson 1998, 454, 460–461. While Hammurapi claims in his royal inscription E4.3.6.11 that he was the one to capture Mari and to destroy its walls, laying waste to the city, this has been called into question (e.g. by Sasson 1988, according to whom Zimri-Lim probably died of natural causes and Hammurapi was called in to oversee the transition of power in the city, during the course of which he annexed its territories in a peaceful manner by moving the city administration to Babylon and the people to safety elsewhere).

⁶²¹ Bunnens & al. 2006, 65.

⁶²² Postgate 1994, 136, 280; Harris 1965. See Spaey (1993, 411) for a bibliography of discussions concerning the judicial use of the divine weapon.

⁶²³ James 1961, 36.

throughout ANE texts and iconography, the weapons of the Storm-God in particular were the object of a cult.⁶²⁴ The mythological and ideological foundation for the reverence of the Storm-God's weapons is to be found in the Combat Myth.⁶²⁵ The special weapons of the Storm-God play an important role in the myth, aiding in his becoming the king of the gods. The weapons with which the Storm-God defeated the sea were in fact the most characteristic of the deity's attributes.⁶²⁶ Iconographic motifs from a wide geographic area witness to this politicized mythology.⁶²⁷

The letter of a Mari official Nur-Sin to King Zimri-Lim (FM 7 38),⁶²⁸ published by J.-M. Durand in *Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* (MARI) 7, makes mention of the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo. My translation of the letter can be found in Appendix II. The letter has been at the centre stage of a political interpretation of the Combat Myth.⁶²⁹ It has been associated with the tradition of the Combat Myth ever since its publication, when Durand already made the connection between the sea of the letter and the Storm-God's enemy, Yam of the Baal Cycle. The Storm-God's weapons, presumably the very same as in FM 7 38, are also mentioned in another Mari letter (FM 7 5), recording their advent in one of the three major urban centres in the kingdom of Mari, to be placed in the temple of Dagan at the city of Terqa.⁶³⁰ The Mari texts

⁶²⁴ Bunnens & al. 2006, 65. One ought not to make too much out of the deification of weapons in ancient Mesopotamia, as there is textual evidence that musical instruments and cultic objects, such as censers, could also be given a divine determinative. Smith 2009, 217; Selz 1997.

⁶²⁵ Schwemer 2008b, 24.

⁶²⁶ Bunnens 2006, 65; Holloway 2002, 167.

⁶²⁷ See, for example, the smiting scene in the so-called Re-Herakhte blocks near the 10th Pylon of the Akhenaten temple at Karnak. The inscription under the arm of the god Amun was reconstructed by Redford (1983, 366) as recounting the god's words for the king: "Receive [the *hpš*-sword, O mighty king], now that I have [recei]ved this beautiful monument [which you have made], [every] land being [beneath your feet]".

⁶²⁸ See Appendix for the texts. According to Sasson 1994, 314, the letters were sent from Kallassu, a smaller city in the vicinity of Aleppo. According to him, the motivation was to request animals for sacrificing to the Addu of Kallassu, as specified in another text from the same prophet (A.1121+). I find it likely that the Addu of Kallassu was a franchise of the near-by Addu of Aleppo.

⁶²⁹ Schwemer 2001, 213–216, for example, suggests that the letters speaking in the voice of the Storm-God of Aleppo were an attempt of Yamhad to exert political influence over the king of Mari.

⁶³⁰ Schwemer discussed the texts in 2001, 226–232. On Dagan as the pre-eminent storm-god in the Upper and Middle Euphrates area, see Green 2003, 68–72. Baal(-Hadad) is described as the son of Dagan in the Ugaritic texts (KTU 1.5 VI 23, 1.10 III 12, 1.14 II 25). There also appears to have been a temple dedicated to him in the city of Ugarit in addition to the temple of the storm-god Baal – although not everyone agrees that the temple was dedicated to Dagan; see Day 2000, 86–90. In Babylon, Dagan and Adad seem to have shared a bride according to Lambert 1980, 137. There seems to have been a close relationship, often interpreted as familial, between the two, possibly owing to their similar spheres of influence, or possibly to the political organization of the Amorite kingdoms, where a senior king sponsored his juniors,

were also later connected by K. Kohlmeyer to an orthostat relief discovered in the temple of the Storm-God in the Aleppo citadel. The relief features an image of the Storm-God bearing a weapon, as well as an inscription naming the weapon.⁶³¹

The city of Aleppo, the capital of the kingdom of Yamhad, was the central cultic site for the weather-god in the ANE. Yamhad was arguably the greatest of the Amorite kingdoms in the OB period – a fact that is sometimes unfortunately forgotten due to the fact that we do not possess Yamhadian texts and we have not discovered Yamhadian archives, for the simple reason that the Yamhadian capital has been continuously inhabited all the way down to the present day.⁶³² The king of Yamhad was greater in stature than the kings of Babylon and the other Amorite kingdoms of the age (as famously recounted in AREP 117/A.482, a letter from a Mari official Itur-Asdu to Zimri-Lim, where he states that twice as many kings follow Yarim-Lim of Yamhad than the kings of other Amorite cities, such as Babylon or Larsa). Thus, it is unsurprising that the king and the god of the city held considerable political sway in the ANE, especially during the Amorite kingdom period.

The city of Aleppo served as a cult centre for the Storm-God from the Early Bronze Age (henceforth EBA) onwards.⁶³³ Aleppo was also a central location for travellers in the Syrian area, which is probably the reason behind its importance as a cultic location. Yeivin described the campaign of the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III, with the pharaoh having reached the Euphrates via Aleppo like *every traveller* passing through Northern Syria.⁶³⁴ It would seem that anyone wanting to travel from the Mediterranean shore to the Euphrates (or vice versa) would have had to make his way through the city of Aleppo. The centrality of Aleppo and its god is not accidental in the formation of this foundational mythology. Aleppo was not merely the cultic centre of the Upper Euphrates, as strong Yamhad also seems to have enforced a “Pax Yamhadiana” during the period of the Amorite Kingdoms.⁶³⁵

projected into the divine realm.

⁶³¹ Gonnella, Khayyata & Kohlmeyer 2005.

⁶³² Sumu-Epuh, a contemporary of Yahdun-Lim, is the first king of Yamhad of whom we have information. Through intermarriage and conquest he had joined the Amorite cities of Alalakh and its vassals Tuba, Arpad, and Tuttul to his empire. He was also the one to take young Zimri-Lim under his wing. But it was under Yarim-Lim that the kingdom of Yamhad was at its greatest. Frayne 1990, 780; Hamblin 2006, 259. Yahdun-Lim mentions the mighty weapon with which Sumu-Epuh conquered his foes in his inscription E4.6.8.2:83.

⁶³³ Schwemer 2008a, 162.

⁶³⁴ Yeivin 193, 214.

⁶³⁵ Sasson 1966, 161–162.

The pre-eminence of the Aleppan Storm-God in the ANE is evidenced by the fact that, while storm or weather-gods were worshipped by different names in different areas, there are temples and shrines found in several cities dedicated specifically to the Aleppan or Halabean Storm-God.⁶³⁶ There also seems to have been a connection between the royal houses of Aleppo and Mari, which is based on the similar onomastic elements (namely, -Lim) in the names of the monarchs of these two cities.⁶³⁷ Malamat suggested that the origins of the Mari dynasty may even have been in Northern Syria.⁶³⁸ Mari and Aleppo were also linked by the political significance of their reverence of the Storm-God, which set them apart from the rest of the Mesopotamian area, where astral deities were more prominent. Green has emphasized that the power of the Storm-God in the area was not a mere mythological projection of natural elements, but its importance is “highlighted time and again as the Warrior-god of the kings of the region in their conquests around the kingdom of Mari and in the neighbouring regions”.⁶³⁹ Whether the reverence of the Storm-God was environmental, political, or coincidental is impossible to determine, but it undoubtedly aided in the incorporation of Yamhadian mythology for the uses of the Mariote monarchy.

It is also important in this context to make note of the inscription E2.1.1.4, which is a dedication of a mace (A.MU.RU) to a god, whose name is unfortunately broken off, by Sargon himself, inscribed on a mace head. Sargon’s son likewise dedicated a mace head to Enlil (E2.1.2.10). The text E2.1.1.15. also features Enlil giving Sargon a sceptre (^{gis}GIDRU). In E2.1.4.3 vi 22–24,⁶⁴⁰ it is further implied that Naram-Sin was in possession of this sceptre and that it was intended for his rightful successors, meaning that Naram-Sin received an ancestral weapon that was believed to have been wielded by the Storm-God. This witnesses to the fact that Sargon dedicated weapons, among them mace heads, to deities, and that his successors made use of these weapons. It follows that he may have, and likely had, dedicated one to the god of the most important cult centres of the

⁶³⁶ Hawkins 2011, 35–36; Weippert 1997, 118; Schwemer 2008a, 162–163, 165. Even though there are many known local temples or shrines dedicated to a storm-god, a number of these were actually dedicated to the very Storm-God of Aleppo, acting like satellite or franchise shrines of the Aleppo-based god.

⁶³⁷ The same element is also found in the dynastic names of Me-Turran, Ḫana, Andariq, Carchemish, and Alalakh. Frayne 1990. This is unsurprising in light of the tradition of the Amorite kings bequeathing kingdoms to their sons. Sasson (2001, 333) also mentions Qarni-Lim of Andariq, a vassal of Mari, having himself placed as king on the throne of Apum.

⁶³⁸ Malamat 1965, 370.

⁶³⁹ Green 2003, 59.

⁶⁴⁰ Ditto E2.1.4.5.

ancient world, on his march through the domain of the Upper Euphratean Storm-God. While it is to enter pure conjecture to suggest that the weapons housed in the temple of the Storm-God may have been ancestral weapons that had once belonged to Sargon himself, a case could be made for it. Had this indeed been the case, it seems that the later temple personnel were no longer aware of the fact, believing the weapons to have been wielded by the Storm-God.

The storm-god usually associated with Aleppo was Addu, whose name seems to be the East Semitic equivalent of Hadad, a name associated with Baal in Ugarit.⁶⁴¹ There is also evidence linking the city of Mari itself to a storm deity. During the Amorite era, the pantheon of Mari was a NWS set of deities headed by the storm-god (Dagan and, earlier, Mer), related to the pantheons of other Northern Mesopotamian and Syrian city-states, though it exhibits certain Sumerian influences.⁶⁴² Mer or Wer, either the patron god and the namesake of Mari or,⁶⁴³ in Lambert's terms, a *numen loci* exalted into a *deus persona*, was the name of an old storm-god of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, and for that reason one the highest of the pantheon at Mari. The god was nevertheless later identified with the storm-god Adad.⁶⁴⁴ The connection between the god and the city may be evidenced by the fact that the popularity of the god diminished after the destruction of the city and the decline of its cult centres, and Mer became less popular than Addu after the 2nd millennium BCE.⁶⁴⁵ However, the names of individual, localized storm deities are not as important as the functions these gods had in their respective societies and the roles they played in the political and social landscape of the Fertile Crescent, as opposed to the Southern Mesopotamian area, where the concept of storm-gods was less favoured.

FM 7 5, heralding the arrival of the Aleppan weapons into Mari territory, suggests that the weapons mentioned in FM 7 38 were not merely mythological symbols, but that the letter references actual cultic objects.⁶⁴⁶ According to

⁶⁴¹ It is possible that the original name of the storm-god was Hadad or Baal-Hadad, known later only by his epithet "Lord" (Baal).

⁶⁴² Lambert 1985a, 532.

⁶⁴³ Schwemer 2001, 200–210. The connection between Mer and Mari was questioned by Lambert (1985b, 535) on linguistic grounds (only in the Code of Hammurabi (iv 30) is the form *me-ra* for the name of the city found), although he did not entirely reject the possibility.

⁶⁴⁴ Lambert 1985b, 534–535. Also: "Mer, Itur-Mer and Ilu-Mer are names of an old storm god of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, for that reason one of the highest in the pantheon, and in this environment he could survive alongside Addu, though he was less popular after the middle of the second millennium, probably due to the decline of his main cult centres".

⁶⁴⁵ Lambert 1985a, 535.

⁶⁴⁶ Literal understanding of the weapons of the letters was suggested already by Schwemer (2001,

Malamat, the weapons of the Storm-God were presented as a coronation gift to Zimri-Lim upon his visit to Aleppo (mentioned in M.8806),⁶⁴⁷ where the weapons had also been fashioned,⁶⁴⁸ although we do not actually know whether the weapons were made in Aleppo. The interpretation of the weapons as a coronation gift is somewhat contradicted by FM 7 5 implying that the weapons were transported to Mari later during his reign. Sasson tentatively dated the letter to Zimri-Lim's third year, which would make it unlikely that the weapons were used in a coronation ceremony – if indeed the king even had a ceremonial coronation.⁶⁴⁹ But it is by no means *impossible* that the weapons were involved in his coronation. For example, Bunnens held that the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo were held at Terqa in order to participate in Zimri-Lim's investiture.⁶⁵⁰

In the two Mari texts, we are dealing with non-mythological accounts of divine weapons which make use of mythological conceptions. While some bold interpretations of the meaning of the texts have been made,⁶⁵¹ we do not have full insight as to their actual purpose. Malamat was convinced that the myth of the battle between the two deities, originally reflecting the furious character of the Mediterranean, is mentioned for the first time in the Mari period,⁶⁵² and, one would assume, in these particular Mari texts. FM 7 38 was of great significance to Malamat, inasmuch as it witnesses to the concept of the Mediterranean as a sacred sea. He went so far as to call it, along with Yahdun-Lim's previously discussed "Foundation Inscription of the Shamash Temple" (RIME 4.6.8.2), "overt witnesses attesting to the conceptualization of the Mediterranean as a religious-mythological entity".⁶⁵³ The difference between the inscriptional (Yahdun-Lim) and epistolary (Zimri-Lim) nature of the evidence must, however, be noted. The first is an example of propaganda, being outward communication *from* the monarchic institution, while the latter was delivered *to* the king personally.

While the weapons of the Storm-God apparently served as cultic objects, the

216) and in a footnote by Nissinen 2003a, 22.

⁶⁴⁷ Heimpel (2003, 54, 58) claims that during his 8th or 9th regnal year, Zimri-Lim and his father-in-law Yarim-Lim of the kingdom of Aleppo travelled together to the shores of the Mediterranean. See also Schwemer 2001, 215, who thinks Zimri-Lim made it to Ugarit.

⁶⁴⁸ Malamat 1998, 27. He uses the term 'pilgrimage'.

⁶⁴⁹ Sasson 1994, 313.

⁶⁵⁰ Bunnens 2006, 65. Ditto Schwemer 2001, 226.

⁶⁵¹ E.g. Malamat 1998, 27: "Adad, the great god of Aleppo, was engaged in a battle with the sea, wielding weapons against the rebellious Mediterranean". The most thorough and non-fanciful examination of the letters is found in Schwemer 2001, 211–237.

⁶⁵² Malamat 1998, 34

⁶⁵³ Malamat 1998, 27, 33

weapons themselves were not purely symbolic. They were actual weapons, probably made of precious or otherwise special materials.⁶⁵⁴ It is quite unclear what distinguished a divine weapon from an ordinary weapon.⁶⁵⁵ What separates a ceremonial weapon from an ordinary weapon can be the precious material used in its fashioning. A weapon made of precious but soft materials such as gold could never have been intended for use as an actual weapon.⁶⁵⁶ I have suggested⁶⁵⁷ four possible, but not in and of themselves sufficient, conditions for interpreting a weapon from the archaeological record as a divine weapon:

- 1) weapons made of precious materials,⁶⁵⁸
- 2) weapons with inscriptions dedicating them to deities,⁶⁵⁹
- 3) weapons found *in situ* in temple complexes and other cultic sites,⁶⁶⁰ and
- 4) weapons otherwise unsuitable for human use (e.g. due to their size).⁶⁶¹

There are several weapons found from various excavations that fulfil one or more of the conditions, but it is still difficult to ascertain whether any one of them was actually used as a divine weapon in the sense that OB texts describe them. The third category, it must be pointed out, may have featured ancestral weapons, weapons that had been used in actual warfare by a (possibly later divinized) ancestor, and which can be differentiated from ordinary weapons only by their find context. Furthermore, in order to be able to interpret a weapon of any of these categories specifically as the weapon of the Storm-God, the weapon should either

⁶⁵⁴ Schwemer (2001, 298–299) quotes a fragmentary text ARM VIII 91, which may suggest that the weapons were made of gold. The term for ‘weapon’ is, however, reconstructed.

⁶⁵⁵ Hamblin 2006, 99.

⁶⁵⁶ Contra Vidal 2011, 249–250, who suggests that such ceremonial weapons were actually employed by officers on the battlefield as sceptres. He cites texts from Mari (e.g. ARM 25 735) which list silver and bronze spears given to Mari lieutenants. The fact that one lieutenant could be awarded up to 16 silver spears at one time – which he most likely would not have distributed to his men – suggests that the weapons were most likely given to the officers as wages or spoils of war (as sceptres or symbols of command, or otherwise), not weapons to be used. The variance in the number and material of the weapons given to individual officers would also seem to indicate their being rewards.

⁶⁵⁷ Töyräänvuori 2012.

⁶⁵⁸ E.g. Parrot 1956, Pl. LXII figs. 1097, 1098 golden spears from the temple of Ishtar at Mari; Dunand 1939, golden and electrum fenestrated axes from the temple of Astarte at Byblos; Callot 2011, fig. 158, alabaster dagger handle from the temple of Dagan at Ugarit.

⁶⁵⁹ E.g. Güterbock 1965 dedicated to Nergal; Price 1905 dedicated to Shamash; Budge 1912, Pl. 50 mace heads dedicated to Nergal and Ishtar. See also the Egyptian Semitic adze blade containing the names of both god (Sobek and Re) and the god-king (Apepi). James 1961, 40 (BM 66206, Ill. 6, Pl. XIII).

⁶⁶⁰ E.g. Biran 1989 by the altar at Tel Dan; RS 9.250 from the Hurrian temple at Ugarit.

⁶⁶¹ E.g. the weight of the sword in Güterbock 1965; rarity of materials mentioned by Bloch-Smith 2003. James (1961, 36) mentions that in the Egyptian context, weapons of symbolic status were often made of very thin metal and were generally smaller than actual weapons, and they also bore no wear from use. Full-sized weapons were rare, and in the Egyptian context, most of the symbolic weapons were inscribed with the names of kings rather than divinities. On p. 38, James mentions that weapons made for ritual and funerary purposes also frequently lack efficient edges.

be in the form of a mace, or have a dedication to the Storm-God inscribed on it.

It must be pointed out that there is an actual ceremonial or votive weapon, dated to the time of Mari (c. 1800 BCE).⁶⁶² This weapon is a sword containing an Old Assyrian inscription, which Güterbock speculates was dedicated to Nergal (the inscription reads *ana bēlim ša Ḫutešalim*, “to the lord of Ḫutešalim”, a place of uncertain location). The sword weighs over 5 kg, with most of its weight in its ornate hilt, the end of which also features a cavity that was probably used to set the sword in an upright position. It would seem that swords and daggers as ritual weapons were connected to netherworld deities and the cult of the dead,⁶⁶³ and therefore it is somewhat unlikely that the weapons of the Storm-God would have included a sword.⁶⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it seems plausible that the other weapon wielded by the Storm-God was a club or a mace, being the symbol of (divine) power in general. Furthermore, while it seems that the figure of forked lightning was considered the natural symbol of the Storm-God, what manner of human weapon this forked lightning was transformed into is another question.

Although the Egyptian pharaoh was presented with weapons upon his coronation and the Akkadian Naram-Sin had received divine weapons upon his accession to the throne, we have no evidence of this having been a widespread custom in Syria during the OB period. Ricks & Sroka made a synthesis of the “more widely attested features” of the coronation ceremony in the ANE, featuring a ritual combat and the receiving of symbolic regalia, including a sword, during

⁶⁶² OB votive or ceremonial weapons have also been found in Mari. There seem to be several Cretan or Cretan-style ceremonial weapons mentioned in the Mari texts (ARMT XXI 231:1–4, 15–16, XXIII 104:30, XXIV 98:10, XXV 601:10–13, and possibly XXV 39:10), which is curious when one considers that the fashioner of Baal’s weapons, the smith Kothar-wa-Ḫasis, is said to have come from the island of Crete (Kaphtor). Malamat has also called attention to the text A.675, which refers to what seems to be a ceremonial dagger, overlaid with gold and lapis lazuli, which he suggests might have been dedicated to a deity; Malamat 1998, 37–38. Most of the Cretan ceremonial weapons were, according to the texts, gilded and encrusted with lapis lazuli, which is what one would then expect the Storm-God of Aleppo’s weapons to have been, if they actually existed. Among the weapons is also featured a golden lance (*imittum*), found in the temple of Ishtar at Mari. CAD VII 126 and YOS VIII no. 76 suggest that the *imittum* was considered the symbol of Ishtar. See Vidal 2011 247–248 for a list of precious weapons mentioned in Mari texts.

⁶⁶³ Güterbock 1965, 197–198.

⁶⁶⁴ Contra Bunnens 2006, 66, according to whom the *ktp* which is parallel to *šmd* (often translated as ‘mace’, see Ginsberg 1935, 328: “Such mace heads are found frequently in excavations”), as Baal’s weapon in KTU 1.6 V 2–3 has the meaning of ‘scimitar’. Bunnens, however, does not favour its interpretation as a sword on the basis of the fact that in the Ugaritic stela, Baal’s sword is still in its scabbard. The word originally denotes the shoulder blade, so a bladed weapon of some sort may be considered. One ought to also consider the swords of Aššur and Yahweh in this context. For example, Kang (1989, 40) juxtaposes Aššur and Yahweh: “The weapon with which the king got victory was given from the god Aššur. So the war was the war of the god Aššur as the war of Israel was the war of Yahweh”.

the installation.⁶⁶⁵ However, their reconstruction is altogether too general – a caveat they readily admit to – to be applied to the OB period, where such features find little textual support.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, the evidence of mythologizing or propagandistic texts, like royal inscriptions, is not on par with the evidence of administrative or private letters, such as we find from Mari and Uruk (e.g. in Holma 1914).

Malamat also wonders whether or not all of Aleppo's vassals were awarded such weapons,⁶⁶⁷ while Sasson comes to the conclusion that Zimri-Lim's marriage to the Yamhadian princess ascertained the political importance of the Halabean god at Mari.⁶⁶⁸ There is little textual evidence to warrant such speculation. Schwemer connected the weapons of FM 7 38 to a letter from Yarim-Lim of Yamhad to Yashub-Yakhad, the prince of Dēr (A.1314), which makes mention of the weapons having been used to quell a revolt.⁶⁶⁹ In the text, the weapons are twice called “the weapons of Addu *and* Yarim-Lim”, and the parity of Addu and Yarim-Lim is asserted a third time. Most likely these were in fact the same weapons as mentioned in FM 7 38 and FM 7 5, which were used by Yamhad to symbolically assert its authority over the vassal kings.⁶⁷⁰ Schwemer mentioned texts from Ebla which indicate that in Eblaite incantations evil was magically bound to the weapon of the storm-god Hadda,⁶⁷¹ possibly to draw it away from somewhere else. This suggests that the weapon of the Storm-God was thought to have purificatory aspects.

According to Spaey, during the OB period, the use of divine weapons was integrated into concrete acts, most of which related to judicial procedures.⁶⁷² Based on textual sources, the witnessing of oaths, treaties, and contracts seems to

⁶⁶⁵ Many of these topics were already discussed by Hooke 1933.

⁶⁶⁶ Ricks & Sroka 1994.

⁶⁶⁷ Malamat 1998. While the leasing out of the weapons of the Storm-God seems to have been a business venture for the clergy, that weapons were given to all vassals seems unlikely on the basis of Zimri-Lim's close familial relationship with Yarim-Lim of Aleppo-Yamhad. Furthermore, we lack evidence for such a practice.

⁶⁶⁸ Sasson 1994, 316.

⁶⁶⁹ Schwemer 2001, 212, 226. Also translated by Sasson 2014, 686.

⁶⁷⁰ Sasson 1994, 316: “As a god of a foreign land, Addu of Halab does not demand the gifts of beasts and servants that are commonly requested of Zimri-Lim [...] But Addu of Halab can appeal to the experience of past history that when properly observed can teach lessons on morality of power and the cost of its abuse. He can offer Zimri-Lim not more territory, but the authority of his weapon and the shield of his numinous glow by which to perpetuate his legitimacy and dynasty”.

⁶⁷¹ Schwemer 2008a, 154.

⁶⁷² Spaey 1993, 413.

have been the main function of divine weapons.⁶⁷³ According to Vidal, within the Amorite culture, the functions of jewelled prestige weapons, among which divine weapons can be counted, consisted of their use as parade weapons, votive offerings, and funerary objects.⁶⁷⁴ Divine weapons also had very specific functions in and of themselves, such as witnessing promissory oaths and testimonies, meting out divine judgements and settling disputes, as well as sanctioning military undertakings. According to the textual sources, divine weapons were also used to witness the drawing up and sealing of documents, and for ensuring the fair distribution and storage of harvest.⁶⁷⁵ In fact, the texts of the OB period seem to contain quite a lot of information on ways in which divine weapons were used.

Discussing the concept of the “Journey of the Divine Weapon”, Harris describes of the practice of transporting the divine weapon, during which the weapon of the chief god of the city could be taken out of the temple to be used for the purposes of oath-taking or settling disputes at a location outside of the sacred precincts. According to Harris, divine weapons could be carried in a procession, used in religious ceremonies during the harvest, or employed as the object or symbol of promissory oaths usually taken inside temples or other sacred spaces. Harris pointed out, however, that the texts mentioning these divine weapons reveal very little about the way in which the weapons were released by temples for such purposes.⁶⁷⁶ According to Harris, the first mentions of these “journeys” of divine weapons are from the time of Hammurapi, a contemporary to Zimri-Lim, and they seem to have been confined to the OB period.⁶⁷⁷

Spaey suggested that the divine weapon functioned both as a visual medium for the taking of oaths, which would have been taken in front of the god’s symbol, and in practical use, suggesting that the credibility of opponents in litigation was tested by physically carrying the weapon from the temple to a field and circumambulating it three times, or tearing the weapon out of the soil in a feat

⁶⁷³ Sasson 2013, 120. Already in 1917 Walther connected divine weapons with the taking of oaths and making contracts, on pp. 192–194 listing Babylonian texts that make mention of divine weapons.

⁶⁷⁴ Vidal 2011, 251.

⁶⁷⁵ Holloway 2002, 168; Spaey 1993, 415; Walther 1917, 191–210.

⁶⁷⁶ Harris 1965, 217–220, 224.

⁶⁷⁷ Harris 1965, 217–220, 224. Edelman (2009, 99–100) described a later Zoroastrian tradition in which a throne of fire is carried “like a king” by the priests in procession and the swords and maces of Mithra are carried alongside the throne, forming a “royal bodyguard” for the throne. According to her, the fire “seems to represent a substitution of the sacred fire for a physical representation of Ahura Mazda – as an enthroned royal celestial king of heaven”.

of both physical and mental fortitude.⁶⁷⁸ Although I have come across no textual evidence for this, one wonders whether a divine weapon could also have been used for an ‘ordeal by combat’ type of scenario. Spaey mentions a text (CBS⁶⁷⁹ 1513) in which the divine weapon of Adad in particular is used. In the text the divine weapon is involved in the traditional enumeration of fields and division of goods between heirs. He proposed that the divine weapon was used for an oath-taking ceremony to prevent the heirs from making future claims against one another.⁶⁸⁰ What makes the short text interesting in this context of the Mariote texts is the mention that the act involving the weapon of the Storm-God took place in the “sanctuary of the house of their father” (*i-na É i-še-er-tim ša É a-bi-šu[nu]*), which parallels the mostly restored mention of the “throne of the house of your father” in FM 7 38. This may be connected with the use of familial terminology among the Amorite kings (discussed in more detail in section 5.1.3).

It has perhaps been too readily assumed that a palace or a royal lineage was meant by the phrase “the house of the father” in FM 7 38, as this text suggests that the “house of the father” was simply a place in which divine weapons could be used – or perhaps even *the* place where they were meant to be used. Note, however, the use of the term “house of the father” in a letter (A.1121+A.2731) dated to the later years of Zimri-Lim’s reign, which does at least suggest inheritance of the realm.⁶⁸¹ It should also be noted that thrones were not merely symbolic but actual physical objects that the Amorite kings gifted to each other. Sasson pointed out that Ibalpi-El, the king of Eshnunna, actually sent Zimri-Lim a throne as a gift and as a physical symbol of alliance. In this same text, the king of Eshnunna reminds Zimri-Lim of how Yahdun-Lim, “your father”, had grasped the “hem of the house of Eshnunna”, which indicates that Yahdun-Lim had had the backing of Eshnunna for his kingship.⁶⁸² Ibalpi-El continues: “because you are my son and plan to continue grasping my hem”, using the vocabulary of royal adoption, which I will examine in a subsequent chapter.

There are also textual reasons for associating the weapons in the Mari letters with the “Journey of the Divine Weapon”. The cuneiform term used for the weapons in the text of FM 7 38 is ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.MEŠ, referring merely to a non-

⁶⁷⁸ Spaey 1993, 413.

⁶⁷⁹ *Catalogue of the Babylonian Section*, siglum of tablets. Philadelphia, PA: University Museum of Philadelphia.

⁶⁸⁰ Spaey 1993, 418.

⁶⁸¹ Schwemer 2001: 213–214.

⁶⁸² Sasson 1998, 462.

specified weapon. While ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.MEŠ does broadly refer to a weapon, arguments have been made in favour of understanding the term as ‘divine weapon’ specifically, in the sense of a technical term. In two Alalakh texts (AT 1:17, 456:26–27), we also find the Sumerian term ^{GIŠ}TUKUL and the Akkadian term *kakkum rabûm*, which has been rendered as ‘weapon of the Storm-God’, without reference to any specific weapon.⁶⁸³ Fronzaroli also called attention to a text from Ebla describing the Storm-God’s weapon as ^{GIŠ}UŠ, probably corresponding to ^{GIŠ}BAR.UŠ, which has been translated with the Akkadian *û-tum* and which Fronzaroli translated as ‘*bâton*’.⁶⁸⁴ The weapon of the Storm-God, ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ša ^dIM, is, however, mentioned explicitly in a text from Sippar, TCL I no. 140 (= TD 140, AO 1924), dating to the end of the 18th century BCE and referencing the “Journey of the Divine Weapon”.⁶⁸⁵ Lines 1–3 read:

<i>gi-ir-ri</i> EBUR ša ^{GIŠ} TUKUL ša ^d IM	Harvest journey of the weapon of the Storm-God
<i>iš-tu ša a-ru-[m]a-lik</i>	from (that) of Aru-Malik
<i>a-di ša ma-ri-a-nu-um</i> ⁶⁸⁶	to (that) of Mari

It is possible that the journey of the weapon was from the temple of Aru-Malik to the temple of the Storm-God of Mari. The city of Mari is thus implicated as a station in the “Journey of the Divine Weapon”.

The weapon of the Storm-God, ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ša ^dIM, is also mentioned together with the weapon of Marduk, ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ša ^dAMAR.UTU, in the oath of ZAT 9 18.⁶⁸⁷ According to Harris, the weapons of the two gods may have been used together to increase the coercive power of an oath, again suggesting the witnessing of oaths as the primary function of divine weapons.⁶⁸⁸ In the text CT VI pl. 22, we also find twice the term ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ša ^dUTU, ‘weapon of the sun-

⁶⁸³ Bunnens & al. 2006, 65.

⁶⁸⁴ Fronzaroli 1997, 285.

⁶⁸⁵ Dated to the 22nd year of Hammurapi’s son Šamšu-iluna. The last mention of the leasing of a divine weapon by a temple is from the time of Šamšu-ditana at the beginning of the 16th century BCE. Harris 1965, 221–223. This is not the last time we find divine weapons being housed in temples, however.

⁶⁸⁶ The suffix *-ānu* was used to form geographical names in Sippar texts. Harris 1965, 221. However, Harris does not seem to connect “ša-Mariānum” with Mari. If the dating of the text is correct, it would have been written after the destruction of Mari (although it would not be the only such instance, as the name of Mari continued to be featured in texts long after its destruction). If the place-name indeed refers to Mari, then it would indicate that Mari was associated with the weapon of the Storm-God even after the city ceased to exist.

⁶⁸⁷ Holma 1914, 27, transliterated rather cautiously “[i?-n]a(?) ku(?) ma(?) ša ^uMarduk i!-na! ku(?) ma(?) ša ^uAdad”. Holma himself confessed that he could make no sense of the line (p. 29), interpreting the words as the names of “offizieller Geldprüfungsbureaus”. Walther 1917, 192, however, already interpreted them as “die Waffe Marduks und die Waffe Adads”. The letter concerns silver delivered to the barracks of soldiers, which the weapons of Marduk and Adad are apparently used to investigate (*bi-ir-ra-nim* which Holma translates as “untersuchen”). Of course, the fashion in which the weapons might have been used to execute this task eludes us.

⁶⁸⁸ Harris 1965, 220.

god'. While we do not find the construction ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ša ^dIM in the Mari text FM 7 38, the construction ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.[meš] ša itti *têmtim amtaḥṣu*, 'the weapon(s) with which I defeated the sea', would at least seem to recall the construction used with these other references to cultic divine weapons.⁶⁸⁹

Note also the connection between the weapons of Ninurta and the defeating of the sea. While Livingstone translated a line from a text (BM 47463: 6) recounting the names of Ninurta's weapons as "12 gods of my city: the trampers of the storms", he admitted that it is possible to read the signs UD.UD, 'storms', as *tam-tú*, 'sea', naming the weapons of Ninurta as "the trampers of the sea".⁶⁹⁰ He makes no mention of the Combat Myth, and he apparently opted for the translation that made sense in the context of Ninurta as a storm-god, but both translations are comprehensible. Ninurta was revered at Nippur, the city of the storm-god Enlil, where he was called the DUMU.SAG-^dEN.LÍL-lá, the first among Enlil's sons; in Sargonic oaths, it was often Ninurta who was invoked in the place of Enlil.⁶⁹¹

But even if the Mariote weapons underwent the "Journey of the Divine Weapon" for Zimri-Lim to profess his loyalty to the Aleppan king, unlike in the Sippar legal text translated above there is little in the Mari text itself to indicate whether the weapons of the Lord of Aleppo were transported to Zimri-Lim temporarily or permanently, whether as a gift, to settle some dispute, or to be used as a rallying standard for a military campaign.⁶⁹² While it has been assumed with rather minimal textual support that the weapons of the Mari texts were somehow connected to Zimri-Lim's coronation, in the OB textual evidence divine weapons seem most connected with the taking and confirming of oaths.⁶⁹³ The only use for the weapons that is *not* textually supported in the OB period is their use for coronations, i.e. the king symbolically asserting his dominance over his subjects.

It appears that the divine weapons were indeed presented to the king in later times – not in the context of a coronation, but during the Akītu festival. There is a Late Babylonian text, published by Thureau-Dangin in *Rituel Accadiens* (RAcc. 447–449), in which the high priest (*šešgallu*) brings out the sceptre, the

⁶⁸⁹ PBS VII no. 85 has the phrase *itti* ^{GIŠ}TUKUL ^dUTU ša *še'am imdudu*, "with the weapon of the sun-god, with which they measured the barley", featuring a similar construction.

⁶⁹⁰ Livingstone 1986, 58.

⁶⁹¹ Frayne 2008, 349.

⁶⁹² Schwemer 2008a, 164, also proposed that the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo could have been taken into battle as "a kind of field standard".

⁶⁹³ Spaey 1993, 416: "[...] the establishing of the truth by means of the divine symbol seems to be its proper function".

ring, and the crown with the divine weapon, and presents them to the king before ritually slapping him to see if Bel (i.e. the East Semitic Baal) was favourably disposed towards the monarch.⁶⁹⁴ While the ritual is not one of coronation, it could be seen as an annual re-establishing of the king's coronation or the yearly granting of earthly kingship from his divine counterpart.⁶⁹⁵ If the ritual in the Akītu festival emulated or recreated a symbolic coronation ceremony, weapons may have been presented to the king during the actual enthronement. However, textual evidence for this remains scarce. We do find mention of Naram-Sin having been presented with the weapons of Enlil, Dagan, and Nergal upon his coronation,⁶⁹⁶ but this appears to have been a special case of amassing as much symbolic patronage of the gods for his kingship as he could muster.⁶⁹⁷ Naram-Sin had no senior king bar his famous ancestor and therefore had to generate rather than to appeal to the legitimization of his rule. But divine weapons as symbols of kingship may have been connected with Naram-Sin's character also in later traditions. It is the coronation, however, that seems in modern investigations to be the most popular function for the weapons of the Mari letters, followed by some sort of unspecified ceremony – while this function of the weapons is nowhere explicated in the texts.⁶⁹⁸

Ricks & Sroka defined a coronation ceremony as a series of acts performed in a temple or a sacred precinct, by means of which the king acceded to the throne and was endowed with sovereign power and authority.⁶⁹⁹ The idea that the Mari weapons were used in a coronation ceremony is well accepted, but the notion seems to be based on little else than conjecture. The evidence of FM 7 5

⁶⁹⁴ 2 Sam. 12:30–31 contains a curious passage in which David has the crown of Malcam (מֶלְכָם מִלְכָּם, a reference to Milcom?) placed on his head after the conquest of Rabbah. This is followed by what seems like a cultic act during which the conquered people are put under (the verb מִשָּׁח with the בִּ-preposition is used) a stone saw, iron cutters, and axes of iron. Of course, this could be a simple metaphor for killing or taking control, but it could also reference the judicial use of symbolic weapons, putting the people symbolically under the weapons to determine their fates.

⁶⁹⁵ Ricks & Sroka 1994, 247–248. Lambert 2013, 390: “Quite commonly with myths of origins, it was conceived that what took place in the beginning was repeated in some sense at regular intervals throughout history. In this way, myth and ritual were related”.

⁶⁹⁶ Hamblin 2006, 99.

⁶⁹⁷ See Hallo 1987 for the changes over the centuries in the propagandistic justification of Mesopotamian kingship.

⁶⁹⁸ E.g. Vidal 2011, 248, according to whom it is “attested” in the text of FM 7 5 that the weapons were “used during ceremonies, possibly parades”. However, the only thing the text actually attests to is that the weapons of the Storm-God had arrived in Terqa and were housed in the temple of Dagan for a time. Cf. Appendix for the text. See also Durand 1993.

⁶⁹⁹ Ricks & Sroka 1994, 236. The problem with Ricks & Sroka's approach is its extremely generalizing nature, as they submit that such features were shared by “numerous and often widely separated cultures” from ancient Egypt to pre-Colombian Mexico.

states that the weapons had arrived in Terqa and were stored in the temple, and the address of FM 7 5 suggests that Zimri-Lim was already king at this time.⁷⁰⁰ Terqa was a cult centre for the older Upper-Euphratean storm-god Dagan, the patron of the Mari monarchy.⁷⁰¹ The letter offers no evidence that the weapons ever reached Zimri-Lim personally, or indeed that they were meant to do so. Nor do we have textual evidence of them having been to the Mari capital during his reign.⁷⁰²

The evidence of FM 7 38 is unfortunately obscured by a lacuna at a rather critical juncture in the text, which makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions based on it. It must be emphasized that this is all speculation, as we have precious little textual evidence to go on for ceremonies of coronation (or indeed on how commonplace such ceremonies were to begin with) among the Semitic peoples of the OB period. There are some texts describing rites for the proclamation of vassal kings, which in an ideological sense correspond poorly to the installation of sovereigns, as the symbolic backdrop and function of these acts differ. And the texts on the installations of vassal kings do not explicitly mention divine weapons.⁷⁰³ In any case, Zimri-Lim appears to have undertaken a tour during which he restored the thrones to the former vassal kings of his father,⁷⁰⁴ which may have occasioned the delivery of the Aleppan weapons into his possession. We may speculate on the uses and functions of the weapons, but we do not know their

⁷⁰⁰ It may be erroneous and anachronistic, however, to assume that the (re-)conqueror Zimri-Lim became king only once. See Fleming (2004, 156) for a text in which Zimri-Lim's separate kingship over the Ben-Yaminites and the Akkadians is discussed. On p. 159 he also mentions an unpublished text in which Zimri-Lim is variously called the king of the Amorites and the king of the Akkadians, suggesting that he held these kingships separately.

⁷⁰¹ Terqa had certainly been a power base of the kingdom of Zimri-Lim's predecessor Yahdun-Lim, but his seat of power seems to have been in the city of Mari, where one would expect the hypothetical coronation ceremony to have taken place. Yahdun-Lim's capitals were at Mari and Tuttul. Terqa was situated half-way between the cities of Mari and Tuttul, however, so perhaps a coronation could have taken place at the ancient home of the Mari dynasty for political reasons.

⁷⁰² Fleming 2004, 154. Note that there was no temple for Adad/Addu in Mari. Dagan seems to have been the main deity, the king of the gods, and the patron of Mari kings, and the reverence of Adad speaks of Aleppan patronage. While Adad had no temple at Mari, he was still an important divinity. The cult of the Storm-God of Aleppo was one the most important cults in the entirety of the ANE, on par with the moon-god of Hauran and the Ishtar of Nineveh. Hawkins 2011, 35; Pardee & Glass 1984, 89.

⁷⁰³ See Fleming 2004, 101. Engnell 1967, 77, suggested that a text (Dossin 1938, 1–13) connected to the Ishtar cult at Mari may have belonged to an enthronement festival. But again it must be stressed that they are discussing an annual, calendric ritual, not the symbolic coronation of a monarch upon his accession to sovereign power, which may even be an anachronistic notion. We also have no textual evidence suggesting that the Aleppan weapons would have been used in an annual enthronement festival in the Mari kingdom. Nor do we have evidence of a ritual battle having taken place in a ceremony of coronation, such as envisioned by Ricks & Sroka 1994, 249–253. Furthermore, Schwemer (2001, 278) suggested that the weapons might indeed have been brought to Terqa for a specific cultic function to take place there specifically.

⁷⁰⁴ Sasson 2013, 121, claims that the notion has a modern ring to it, however.

uses for certain. What the texts inform us on is the cultural significance of the divine weapons in the OB period. But as famous and significant as the weapons were, why should we find references to these weapons a millennium later in the texts of the HB?

Next, I will review some texts of the HB which may relate to the tradition of the OB divine weapons and hence may be connected to the Combat Myth tradition. Divine weapons are ostensibly found in a number of Biblical texts, and there are several different kinds of weapons that are mentioned.⁷⁰⁵ While it is possible to read weapons in connection with NWS divinities such as Resheph⁷⁰⁶ in the texts of the HB, it is the weapons mentioned in connection with Yahweh in particular that seem relevant with regard to the OB background of the Storm-God's battle with the sea. Weapons are mentioned in connection with Yahweh in several passages, but none are more pertinent than the passages that seem to describe Yahweh as a weather deity.⁷⁰⁷ While some texts betray likely Babylonian and Assyrian influence, others seem to also draw from a common NWS cultural milieu. The Storm-God's divine combat is the ideological foundation of these allusions to divine weapons in the texts of the HB.

The weapons that are most readily associated with Yahweh are the sword and the bow. The sword (חֶרֶב) is the weapon most often mentioned in connection with Yahweh, whereas the bow is usually alluded to by the mentioning of arrows (חֵץ).⁷⁰⁸ The bow has also been connected with the seal of the covenant that Yahweh makes with mankind after the flood (Gen. 9:12–16), perhaps reminiscent of *EE*, in which Marduk defeats Tiamat with his bow.⁷⁰⁹ Karner associated the

⁷⁰⁵ E.g. חרב ('sword'), קשת ('bow'), חץ ('arrow'), מטה ('staff'), זר ('club'), יד מוקד ('weapon'), חרב ('sword'), רמח ('spear'), חנית ('lance'), קין ('hammer'), שלח ('javelin'), דקר ('pickaxe'), שבט ('sceptre'), 'mace').

⁷⁰⁶ Alluded to, e.g. in Cant. 8:6 רֶשֶׁף יָרָא וְרֶשֶׁף יָרָא, usually translated as “its flashes are the flashes of fire” but see Nissinen 2011, 279 with “its darts are darts of fire”, paralleling “<its flames are> flames of Yah(weh)”. The reconstructed line certainly seems to recall the weapons of Yahweh, the storm deity. According to Gerhard Jr. (1966, 136) ‘fire’ equals lightning, especially lightning that has the power to strike with lethal fury. Note also that in Ugaritic texts Resheph has the designation *šb i* (KTU 1.91:15), paralleling the epithet Yahweh Sebaot.

⁷⁰⁷ Aspects of the weather or storm-god have been noted in connection with Yahweh for a long time. See e.g. Gerhard Jr. 1966. For a more recent discussion on the topic, see Green 2003, 219–280; Müller 2008. Weippert 1997 examined aspects of Yahweh as a weather deity (pp. 47–58), but also discussed the various other elements from ANE cultures, traces of which can be found in the character of Yahweh.

⁷⁰⁸ A sword, being made entirely of metal, was probably considered a more prestigious weapon than spears and lances, which contained only a minimal amount of metal. Few swords have been discovered in the area of Palestine, and most finds consist of the projectile points of arrows, spears, javelins and lances. See Bloch-Smith 2003, 419. If swords were too precious to be used by men, it makes sense that one's god would be armed with such a weapon.

⁷⁰⁹ The sword (as well as the bow; see Kang 1989, 41) was also heavily associated with Aššur, so it

bow (קֶשֶׁת) of 2 Kgs 13:14–20 with a Neo-Assyrian ritual K.3438a+9912//K.9923//K.10209 (which he entitled *König gegen Feind*, ‘The King Versus an Enemy’), in which the king performs a ritual (*Kriegsritual*) for the gods involving a bow, ^{GIŠ}*qassu*.⁷¹⁰ In the passage of 2 Kgs 13, the prophet Elisha seems to perform a ritual in which the king is asked to lay his hand on the bow and the prophet lays his hand on the hand of the king. The bow may indeed be a strong contender for the divine weapon of the Storm-God in Iron Age Palestine, although there it is also associated with the goddess.⁷¹¹ Note also that according to Schwemer, a bow was presented as a votive gift by the ruler of Elam to the Storm-God of Aleppo,⁷¹² which means that a bow may also previously have been in the deity’s arsenal. However, it was not the signature weapon of the divinity being the weapon associated him the deity in iconography.

In the HB passages where Yahweh is portrayed as a weather deity, we also find allusions to weapons associated with the Storm-God in the Syrian area. For example, in Is. 30:30 Yahweh is portrayed using thunder and lightning as his weapons.

וְהַשְׁמִיעַ יְהוָה אֶת-הוֹד קוֹלוֹ	And Yahweh will cause the majesty of <i>his voice</i> to be heard ⁷¹³
וְנִחַת זְרֻעוֹ יִרְאֶה בְּזַעַף אֵף	And he will show <i>the lightning</i> down of his arm with furious anger
וְלֵהַב אֵשׁ אוֹכֶלֶת	and the <i>flame of a devouring fire</i> ,
נֶגֶז וְיָרֵם וְאָבֹר בָּרָד	With a bursting of clouds, and a storm of rain, and hailstones

may be that these instances betray Babylonian and Assyrian influence rather than NWS. See Holloway 2002, 167 for a bibliography on the sword of Aššur.

⁷¹⁰ Karner 2006.

⁷¹¹ Possibly depicted in an Egyptian seal stamp in Morrison 1976, no. 34 pl. 1. (RSF 4) and in a uncannily similar position of the bow in a Gezer limestone conoid in Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 129, illus. 155a, which they associate with the LBA/Early Iron Age warrior class of Ben-Anat. Admittedly, iconographic representations of Anat specifically with a bow are scarce – although there is a relief from Babylon featuring a bow-holding Ishtar and Adad (Wilkinson 1991, Plate 3). One is reminded again of how the textual and iconographic expressions of mythological material in the ANE are often seemingly divergent. On this, see Black & Green 1992, 15–21. Ishtar was however defined as “bow-star”(^{kakkab}*qaštu*), at least in Babylon, Arbela, and Elam, connecting the goddess to the symbol of the bow. See Lewy 1965, 267–268. According to Langdon 1909, xvi–xvii, the association of Ishtar with the bow-star or Sirius predated her association with the planet Venus. While pointing out that *kaukabt-* was a standard title of the goddess Astarte, Stieglitz (1990, 87) also ponders whether *kabkab* was also a title of the god Ashtar at Ebla. If both Ashtar and Ashtar were associated with the word for star, it would fit with their association with Venus as morning and evening star.

⁷¹² Schwemer 2008a, 164.

⁷¹³ Gerhard Jr. (1966, 133) translated this as “And the descent of his arm (?) shall be seen”. Contrast this with Wyatt’s (1996) idea of Yahweh’s outstretched arm as a weapon, but also with the iconographic motif of the god in the smiting position, as seen, e.g. in the *Baal au foudre* - stele, where the weapon of the smiting Storm-God is the vegetal lightning-tree. Weippert 1988, 310ff., calls the same type “Jugendliche kriegerische Götter” and Keel & Uehlinger 1992, 134, call it “Der Herrscher, der über seine Feinde triumphiert”. The problem with interpreting the iconography of the smiting god is that the god Resheph is also frequently featured in this position, especially in Egyptian iconography.

Other passages where Yahweh appears to use thunder and lightning as weapons can be found, for example, in 1 Sam 7:10, 2 Sam. 22:14–15/Ps. 18:14–15⁷¹⁴ and Ps. 29:3–5, in which the “voice of Yahweh” is upon the waters and Yahweh sits enthroned on the flood, reminiscent of the Storm-God’s defeat of the monstrous sea in Ugaritic myth.⁷¹⁵ I discuss the concept of the enthronement of the divinity upon the Flood in section 5.4. As one finds in iconography, in Biblical texts the lightning also sometimes proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh and at other times is described as his arm.⁷¹⁶ Most mentions of these ostensible weapons also feature the sea and hence may contain remnants of Combat Myth traditions.

Jer. 23:29, which makes mention of a word that is like fire, may also allude to the weapons of the Storm-God:

הֲלוֹא כֹה דְבַרִי כְאֵשׁ נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה Is not my word thus like fire? Said Yahweh,
וְכַפְשִׁישׁ יִפְצֹץ קֶלֶעַ And like a hammer that breaks the rock?

The hammer or a percussive weapon of some kind is the weapon of the Storm-God in the Syro-Anatolian area, and it is especially the combination of the hammer and the rock that recalls the symbolic constellation.⁷¹⁷ But the parallelism of the hammer with the “word of fire” is also important. The word of fire, possibly referring to the flash of lightning accompanying the thunderous boom of the Storm-God’s voice,⁷¹⁸ is actually depicted in various seals of the Syrian-Anatolian area as a vegetal outgrowth emanating from the god’s mouth.⁷¹⁹ Williams-Forte made a connection between the lightning-tree, which the weather-god is seen brandishing in Syrian iconography, and the “word of tree” (*rgm iṣ*) mentioned in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. in KTU 1.3 III 22–23). In the Baal Cycle, the construction seems to be used as a part of a message formula, with the messages between the deities Baal and Anat being prefaced by several lines of repeated text. Nothing in

⁷¹⁴ This passage also makes mention of an actual weapon, arrows, juxtaposing them with lightning. According to Lewis 2011, 212, the word קֶלֶעַ designating both arrow and lightning bolt is a double entendre.

⁷¹⁵ Müller 2008, 103–132.

⁷¹⁶ Gerhard Jr. 1966, 136.

⁷¹⁷ See discussion in Töyräänvuori 2012, 154; Bunnens 2006, 54; Williams-Forte 1983, 25. The hammer striking the rock may cause sparks, creating the visual and auditory simulacrum of thunder and lightning.

⁷¹⁸ The Hebrew word קֶלֶ (‘voice’) has also been connected with the sound of thunder and the theophany of the Storm-God, e.g. by Gerhard Jr. 1966, 133. On p. 134 he states that the poetic form (רַעַם קֶלֶ) is used specifically to refer to thunder as the voice of the deity.

⁷¹⁹ Williams-Forte 1993. She dubs it the “tree breath” (p. 185).

the Jeremiahic verse particularly suggests that the parallel pair is to be understood as the weapons of Yahweh, especially since they appear in the context of false prophets, but since both word-of-fire (which may have been represented by a spear in the physical world)⁷²⁰ and percussive weapon were the internationally renowned weapons of the Storm-God which had been used to confirm oaths in the OB period, the context of the truthfulness of statements is not out of place for an allusion to the weapons.

Williams-Forte suggested that “the word of tree and whisper⁷²¹ of stone” may refer to thunder and lightning, and thereby to Baal’s weapon. It is possible that the vegetal lightning or the lightning-tree weapon is also referred in a Kassite period Sumerian text BM 6060:24 from the Nippur temple, which mentions ^{GIŠ}*ku-ma-nu 7 u4-mu* ^DAMAR.UTU-*ak*, “the seven(-pointed) laurel wood, the storm of Marduk”. According to Langdon, the text displays clear Semitic influence.⁷²² Kang also discussed the weapons of Ninurta,⁷²³ which included a seven-bladed cutlass and a seven-headed mace, featured for example in the Gudea cylinder.⁷²⁴ In the text UL 13–15 Marduk also fashions a weapon to use against demons from a *kiškanu*-tree, date palm (“mark of office, symbol of kingship, stands in the water-channel of a pure place, reaching to heaven with its arms” UL 13–15, 124–126), and *e’ru*-wood.⁷²⁵ The connection of the Storm-God’s weapons and arboreal trees is widespread in the textual record.

In Ps. 80, a possible allusion is made of Yahweh wielding his *tree-weapon*, possibly referencing a spear of the Storm-God, against his (and the king’s) adversaries.

תְּשִׁלָּהּ קִצְיָרָה עַד-יָם וְאֶל-נָהָר יִזְקֹתֶיהָ	80:11	She ⁷²⁶ sent out her branches unto the sea, and her shoots unto the River.
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Both the branches (קִצְיָרָה) and the shoots (יִזְקֹתֶיהָ) in Ps. 80, being vegetal emanations, may recall lightning or the lightning weapon of the Storm-God, which was sometimes described as an actual tree in ANE iconography, especially

⁷²⁰ See section 6.2.3.

⁷²¹ Lewis (2011, 215) advocates “incantation of stone”, believing wood and stone to be “manipulatives”. It is unclear from the context whether this means that they are being manipulated or they are used as a means to manipulate something.

⁷²² Langdon 1919, 340.

⁷²³ Called by Kramer (1944, 78) a “prototype to the Babylonian Marduk”.

⁷²⁴ Kang 1989, 28.

⁷²⁵ See Geller 2007, xv. In lines 249–251 of the incantation a priest is told to hold the *e’ru*-wood sceptre in his left hand and the date palm on his right. Compare this to the UL 16 ritual for the king, where the priest (and Marduk as his heavenly counterpart) is told to make noise with the *e’ru*-wood sceptre to cast out the storm demons.

⁷²⁶ Being the vine out of Egypt is usually interpreted as the Davidic monarchy.

in the Syro-Anatolian area. The tree weapon is not only held by the Storm-God in iconography, but issues from his mouth as a vegetal outgrowth.⁷²⁷ The concept of the branches and the shoots has been connected to the Davidic monarchy (e.g. in Is. 11:1), usually connoting offspring. Is. 11:11 makes mention of the “mighty cedars” (אַרְזֵי-אֱלֹהִים), but it is easy to see how “the cedars of god” (or even El) could be read into the phrase. In verses 17–18, Yahweh is asked to rebuke his enemies, and that the hand of Yahweh be set upon the man of the right hand: (עַל-אִישׁ יְמִינֶךָ) (תְּהִי-יָדְךָ). The verse only becomes comprehensible if a weapon is read into the word for hand: a divine weapon is to be placed in the hand of Yahweh’s representative on earth.

In the verse of Ps. 80, a weapon may also be implicated by the verb used in the bicolon, as שָׁלַח (to send) is used of the springing of weapons, particularly arrows (Ps. 18:15), and has known military connotations. But more than any iconographic representation of vegetal weapons, it is the parallelism of the sea and the river that brings the passage to the symbolic constellation of the Combat Myth. The area between the sea and the river may have been the king’s or his offspring’s to conquer, but the Sea and the River were the adversaries of the dynastic Storm-God. The mention of two objects that may be conceived of as weapons as well as the twin-names of the Storm-God’s adversary make room for an allusion or a covert reference to the myth, even if the myth is not explicitly recalled by the HB text. At the very least, the text is perusing vocabulary of the Combat Myth.

The icon-object relationship between the deity and the king is relevant considering the backdrop of the OB tradition. This occasion is also one where mentions of divine weapons can be found in Biblical texts (often in reference to foreign kings). Take, for example, Jer. 51:20, where the divinity refers to the king:

מִפִּי-אַתָּה לִי כֶּלִי מִלְחָמָה	You are my club and my weapon of war
וְנִפְצָתִי בְךָ גּוֹיִם	And with you I will shatter the nations
וְהִשָּׁחַתִּי בְּךָ מַמְלָכוֹת	And with you I will destroy kingdoms.

While the weapon in the Jeremiahic passage may be symbolic or interpreted metaphorically, it nonetheless attests to the close connection between Yahweh and divine weapons – an in reference to a percussive weapon, the weapon of the Storm-God specifically.

The battle between the Storm-God and the sea may also be alluded in Ps.

⁷²⁷ Williams-Forte 1983; 1993.

89:14/21–26, the verses of which seem especially fascinating in light of Wyatt’s suggestion that the “hand and outstretched arm of Yahweh” could in some instances refer not simply to the extremities of the body, or to the symbolic use of power, but to actual weapons.⁷²⁸ The sea and the rivers of the passage certainly parallel the epithets of Baal’s enemy “Prince Sea, Judge River” of the Ugaritic myth,⁷²⁹ but there are also other key terms of the Ugaritic adoption scene that can be found in the passage of Ps. 89:21–28, including *the hand*, *the earth*, *the son*, *the beloved*, and *the name*. Ps. 89 presents the most interesting case *vis-à-vis* both the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and the NWS Combat Myth, offering a possible thematic parallel to the Mari letter in which King Zimri-Lim is promised the weapon that Adad had used to defeat the sea. It is one of the most important examples of the Combat Myth being intermixed with political ideology in the texts of the HB.⁷³⁰

Ps. 89 records the setting of the hand upon the sea and the right hand upon the rivers, featuring the *locus classicus* of this motif in the HB.⁷³¹ There has been some discussion concerning whose hands are placed upon the sea and the river, whether Yahweh’s or the king’s. If we consider the king as performing the role of the god in an icon-object relationship, then the hand of Yahweh is also the hand of the king.⁷³² There is an interesting passage in 1 Kgs. 13:6 featuring the phrase “the hand of the king” (יָד־הַמֶּלֶךְ), in which the hand of Jeroboam withers and it is restored to him only after he requests “a man of god” to entreat Yahweh on his behalf. Whether the reference in the passage explicitly pertains to the hand, phallus, or sceptre of the king, the implicit meaning is of symbolic monarchic authority.

Lipiński suggested that verse 89:26 ought to be read in the first-person perfect without the third-person singular suffixes attached to the words ‘hand’ and

⁷²⁸ Wyatt 1998. Cf. also Job 26:13, where the word hand is paired with the verb חָלַל, ‘to pierce’. In this passage, the hand of Yahweh pierces the “fleeing serpent”. Is. 66:14–16 appears to be using similar vocabulary. Verse 14 mentions the hand of Yahweh, verse 15 features a theophany of the Storm-God, and verse 16 mentions the sword of Yahweh along with the aforementioned verb for piercing.

⁷²⁹ Lewis (2011, 223) is also, with regard to the parallelism of sea and river in the psalm, “reminded of Adad letting King Zimri-Lim use his divine weapons, the very weapons Adad used to defeat Tiamat”. The river, it must be pointed out, is nowhere mentioned in the Mari letter.

⁷³⁰ Dahood (1968, 311) described it as a royal psalm in which the Israelite king “prays for deliverance from his enemies”. Earlier scholarship seems to connect the psalm to the theme of kingship and monarchy. For discussion, see Mitchell 2005, 512ff.

⁷³¹ This is not, as Watson (2005, 301–312) submits, in Job 26.

⁷³² Similarly in the Exodus event, the splitting of the sea is attributed to the hand of Moses and to the works of Yahweh. For discussion see Sabo 2014, 425.

‘right hand’, to the effect of “He will set the hand on the sea, and the right hand upon the river”, apparently referring to the hand of the king himself. According to Lipiński, this grammatical formulation would be more reminiscent of Baal’s battle with Yamm, who in the HB appears as Yahweh’s cosmic adversary. To Lipiński, the text was Yahweh’s confirmation of a kingdom for David upon the mythological Sea and River.⁷³³ According to Smith, the passage explicates the support of Yahweh to the Israelite monarchy, through which the power of the human monarch extends to the god’s cosmic enemy, the Sea.⁷³⁴ Traditionally it is the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River which have been read into the parallelism of sea and river in the psalm. The kingdom promised by Yahweh would lie between the two. But the possibility of a mythological use of the parallelism of sea and river has been discussed at least since Dahood.⁷³⁵ It should be noted that the kingdom in the wider ANE which was seen as located “between the sea and the river”, between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates both in a geographic and political sense, was the Amorite Yamhad.⁷³⁶

While the establishment of a kingdom upon the adversaries of the Storm-God does seem to rise rather naturally from the text, the tweaking of the grammar of the passage is hardly necessary – especially in light of El’s proclamation in the Ugaritic texts (discussed in section 5.1.2) also taking place in the first-person singular. And, following Wyatt, the hand in this passage may refer to the actual divine weapon, the king’s sacral cultic weapon. It is possible that the passage was part of the coronation ceremony of the king or a ritual of the yearly re-establishing of kingship akin to the Akītu festival of Babylon, as per the usual interpretation of the OB texts, although I have presented some alternative interpretations for the concept in this chapter. Psalm 89 has also been discussed in the context of the king’s cultic suffering.⁷³⁷ Jeppesen explored the appropriation of the concepts of fertility and justice of Canaanite kingship by the Davidic kings,⁷³⁸ among which the cultic suffering of the king may be counted. In light of the Ugaritic texts, it

⁷³³ Lipiński 1965, 122–135.

⁷³⁴ Smith 1997a, 86; 2001, 159. See also Lelièvre 1976, 253–275.

⁷³⁵ Dahood 1961, 270–271. Note also that Dahood (1961, 309, 316) reads the word *gwr* in v. 20 in light of the Ugaritic *gwr*, ‘hero’, contrasting it with *gwr*, ‘the warrior’ to Yahweh’s chosen one, interpreting the passage as god making “a lad king in preference to warrior” and “exalting “a youth above a hero”, which seems almost like a deconstruction of the idealization of the ancient Semitic warrior-king.

⁷³⁶ Sasson 1966, 162.

⁷³⁷ Loretz 2002, 386–387.

⁷³⁸ Jeppesen 1980, 113.

seems that more than concepts may have been appropriated – or shared.

Wakeman asserted that because the sea and rivers are featured here in different gender and number, they cannot refer to one and the same person, one need not draw a connection between Baal's battle with the sea and this particular psalm passage.⁷³⁹ The featuring of the rivers in the feminine plural certainly seems to preclude a direct quotation from the Baal Cycle (as does the sheer temporal distance between the texts), but the discrepancy in grammatical number is hardly enough to discredit this passage from alluding to the Combat Myth, given that there are numerous points of connection between them. If something can be deduced from the use of the feminine plural for the river, it is that the last redactor(s) of the text either may not have been familiar with the older myth and its connotations, or that the allusion was purposefully distanced from the mythological battle. I find it more likely that, while the language of the ideology was evidently still powerful enough to employ, all of the nuances of the motif of the Storm-God's battle with the sea may not have been explicitly known to the last redactor(s).

Regardless, in the history of the interpretation of Ps. 89:26 it has never been quite clear who sets whose what and where,⁷⁴⁰ but if we were to read the hand here as the weapon wielded by Yahweh, the verse could contain a subtle reference or an allusion to the Combat Myth, used in the context of royal adoption (discussed in section 5.1.2). According to Mitchell, the use of similar language in the setting of both Yahweh's hand and the king's upon the sea in the passage serves to identify the king's might with that of Yahweh.⁷⁴¹ It is one of the most explicit references to the so-called Body Royal in the Biblical texts.

Lewis (2011) further suggested that the word 'name' (*šēm*), a feature of Ps. 89, in the sense of divine name specifically, is employed to describe weapon of ritual warfare in certain Biblical and Ugaritic texts. He presented as an example

⁷³⁹ Wakeman 1973, 92–101.

⁷⁴⁰ Mitchell (2005, 520–521) pointed out that in 4QPs89, the hand of Yahweh has been replaced but the hand of his anointed (i.e. the first person suffix of v. 22 has a third person suffix in the Qumran fragment). He further writes that the "change in possessive suffix and verse order gives a different emphasis to the "power" that protects the people, as the "steadying" of the people by his hand now immediately precedes Yhwh's setting that same hand upon the sea and rivers". My solution to the problem of the suffixes is that by the time of the writing of the Qumran fragment, the possibility of the king actually physically setting the hand (=weapon) of Yahweh upon the sea was no longer a concept that made sense. However, in light of the OB evidence, the king setting the symbol of the divinity's authority upon the sea is a perfectly valid interpretation of the Biblical text.

⁷⁴¹ Mitchell 2005, 518.

the passages from Is. 30:27–33. In verse 27, we find the passage “Behold, the name of Yahweh (שֵׁם־יְהוָה) comes from afar, with burning nostrils (בְּעֵר אֲפִי) and dense clouds of smoke (כֶּכֶד מִשְׁאָה); his lips are full of wrath (כֶּכֶד מִשְׁאָה), and his tongue is a consuming fire (לִשָּׁת אֹכֶלֶת)”. Lewis referred to this as a hypostatic use of the “Name of Yahweh”.⁷⁴² While we clearly seem to be dealing with a theophany of the Storm-God,⁷⁴³ the examples Lewis gave for interpreting שֵׁם־יְהוָה as a physical weapon, rather than to an abstract or metaphoric notion of the power and authority inherent in the concept of the name (a “magic word” of sorts), seem somewhat less convincing than Wyatt’s thesis on the hand of the divinity as a reference to a physical weapon.⁷⁴⁴

The passage of Ps. 89 is also reminiscent of the Assyrian so-called Omens text of Sargon (K. 2130 2:24–25)⁷⁴⁵, which reads:

<i>tāmta ina erēb UTU ibirma</i>	He crossed the sea of the setting sun
<i>šattu XI^{kán} māt erēb UTU</i>	in the 11 th year the land of the setting sun
<i>adī qātišu kātu ikšud</i>	to his hand he completely subjected it. ⁷⁴⁶

With regard to this text and the OB letters from Mari, it is interesting to note that the passage starting from v. 20, and corresponding to the Ugaritic royal adoption scene that I discuss subsequently, has been interpreted as a citation of an oracle text (albeit this theory has not found unanimous support).⁷⁴⁷ The difference between the texts is that in the Omens text, Sargon himself subjects the land, whereas in the psalm passage, interpreting the actors as Yahweh and David, it is the god that grants the king dominion on his behalf. It is likely that David ought also to be read as an archetypal king, the king that stands for all the kings of Israel.⁷⁴⁸

Outside of Ps. 89, the word יָד (‘hand’) is also featured in connection with

⁷⁴² Lewis 2011, 221. He also suggests that in the David and Goliath narrative (1 Sam. 17:45), for example, the name is employed as a weapon “per se”. In the passage, the name of Yahweh is contrasted with ‘sword’ (חֶרֶב), ‘spear’ (חֲנִית), and ‘javelin’ (כִּידֹן). Cf. also Ps. 188:10–11, where the name of Yahweh is used with the verb מָלַל, ‘to cut down’.

⁷⁴³ On Yahweh and the theophany of the Storm-God, see Müller 2008, 237–244.

⁷⁴⁴ This is not to say that his main thesis on the epithet “‘Athtartu-Name-of-Ba’lu” and the possibility of certain words containing effectual power when wielded by cultic functionaries or deities is not correct. Edelman 2009, 84–85, writing on the ‘shem’ and ‘kavod’ theologies, contains bibliography on the various ways the “name” has been interpreted in the Biblical context.

⁷⁴⁵ Published in Rawlinson 1875, pl. 34 no. 1.

⁷⁴⁶ There is a variant BM 26 472, which reads “the sea of the rising of the sun” (i.e. the sea of the East). The antithetic parallelism of the verse, contrasting the juxtaposition of “the sea of the rising sun” with the “land of the setting sun” may be poetic corruption. Malamat (1965, 366) took the two texts as witnessing two separate campaigns of Sargon to the Mediterranean. This seems unlikely.

⁷⁴⁷ Clifford (1980, 43–44) discussed the theory and rejects it.

⁷⁴⁸ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 16. Note that Pitard (2013, 202) suggested that the narrative of the Baal Cycle is thematically much closer in nature to the David narratives than to the *EE*.

the sea in verse 95:5, as is the verb נָצַר, which is found in the connection of the forging of a weapon in Is. 54:17. The passage clearly employs vocabulary from the NWS poetic tradition (such as the earth and mountains mentioned in the preceding verse and paralleling the sea and dry land), while the second half of the psalm owes to the Exodus traditions. The first half, consisting of verses 1–6/7a, is suggested as having belonged to a cultic festival, even though its *Sitz im Leben* within the festival has remained unclear.⁷⁴⁹ The use of the terms betrays word-play more than any conscious allusion to the NWS Combat Myth, although Lelièvre suggested that in the psalm the kingship of Yahweh is dependent on his subjugation of the sea just as the kingships of Baal and Marduk were.⁷⁵⁰ One may even suggest that Ps. 95 had accompanied, or at least describes, swearing fealty to the king and, in post-monarchic times, to Yahweh, presented here as the master of the universe.

Hossfeld & Zenger described the power of Yahweh over creation in the psalm presented first as a vertical journey from the heavens down to the depths, and then spreading horizontally, which is thematically reminiscent of the Ugaritic god-lists.⁷⁵¹ Despite describing the absolute control of Yahweh, the psalm is filled with symbols of royal power, suggested not only by the subjugation of the sea or the bending of the knee in v. 6, but also by the description of the king(-god) as a shepherd in v. 7. A connection between the shepherd king and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle was made by Ginsberg, who also connected it to Zech. 11:4ff.⁷⁵²

The parallelism of the hand and the sea are also mentioned in a Mosaic context in Ex. 14:16, 26–27:

וְאַתָּה הָרָם אֶת־מִטְּוֶה	And you yourself lift up your rod
וְנָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ	And stretch out your hand
עַל־הַיָּם וּבָקַעְתָּהּ	<i>Over the sea and divide it</i>
וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בֵּיבֶשֶׁת	And the sons of Israel went to <i>the midst of the sea</i> on dry ground.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה	And Yahweh said unto Moses:
נָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם	“Stretch out <i>your hand</i> over the sea
וַיָּשֹׁבוּ הַיָּם עַל־מִצְרַיִם	that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians,
עַל־רֶכֶבָּו וְעַל־פָּרָשָׁיו	upon their chariots and upon their horsemen”.

וַיִּטֵּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם	And Moses stretched out <i>his hand</i> over the sea,
וַיָּשֹׁב הַיָּם לַפֶּגֶז בַּבֹּקֶר	and the sea returned in the morning,
לְאַתְחָזוֹ וּמִצְרַיִם נָסוּם לִקְרָאתוֹ	and the Egyptians fled against it, and Yahweh overthrew
וַיִּנְגַּע יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם	the Egyptians in the <i>midst of the sea</i> .

⁷⁴⁹ Loretz 1979, 49–54.

⁷⁵⁰ Lelièvre 1976, 253–375.

⁷⁵¹ Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 459–461.

⁷⁵² Ginsberg 1935, 328.

The first verse is poetic, while the latter verses are a prose rendering of the same scene. Here Yahweh instructs Moses to use his hand to divide the sea, and then he causes the effect of controlling the waters for Moses. In other words, Yahweh allows Moses to use his divine authority to affect a feat of power to conquer and defeat his enemies. Following the motif of subversions in the character of Moses (discussed in section 6.4.1), he does not merely hold his hand atop the sea to subjugate it, but he also undoes this subjugation in order to release and unleash the sea to drown the Egyptians, which is not a feature of any of the ANE witnesses.

While the sea is not featured in the text of the royal psalm Ps. 2:7–9,⁷⁵³ in addition to Ps. 89:21–28 it would seem to present the most striking parallel to the Mariote letter FM 7 38:

יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי	Yahweh said unto me [the king]:
בְּנִי אַתָּה	“You are my son,
אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יָלַדְתִּיךָ	On this day I have begotten you.
שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי	Ask of me,
וְאֶתְּנָה גּוֹיִם נַחֲלָתְךָ	And I will give the nations as your inheritance,
וְאֶחְזֶזְתָּה אֶפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ	And the ends of the earth as your possession
תִּרְעֵם בְּשִׁבְט בַּרְזֶל	You will break them with an iron rod,
כְּכִלִי יִצָּר תִּנְפָצֻם	You will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel /
	You will dash them in pieces with a forged weapon”.

The psalm has been connected to royal ideology, e.g. by Otto, who read the psalm in the context of Egyptian and Assyrian political theologies.⁷⁵⁴ But the similarity of the language to the Amorite witnesses discussed in this thesis warrant examining it also in the context of NWS royal ideology.

The phrase כְּלִי יִצָּר of verse 9 literally refers to an “item” of a “maker”. In light of Is. 54:17,⁷⁵⁵ interpreting the term in the sense of a weapon also in Ps. 2 makes a better parallelism with the ‘iron rod’ of the previous line. The כ and ב - prepositions are notoriously easy to confuse.⁷⁵⁶ Of course, the interpretation of the potter’s vessel is preferred by many (and is supported by the LXX reading of σκεῦος κεραμέως).⁷⁵⁷ Granerød discussed the purposeful alteration of the terminology in the LXX version of Ps. 2, containing as the Hebrew version did “a case of unbearable anthropomorphism”.⁷⁵⁸ There seem to be clear tensions in the text. The sea is not mentioned in this passage of the psalm, but it bears a

⁷⁵³ See Weiser 1962, 109; Anderson 1972, 63; Craigie 1983, 64–65; Kraus 1988, 125.

⁷⁵⁴ Otto 2002, 33–65.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. Is. 54:17: כֹּל-כִּלִּי יִצָּר עָלֶיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח (“no weapon forged against you shall prosper”).

⁷⁵⁶ Cf. Is. 41:25–29 for a deconstruction of the motif.

⁷⁵⁷ E.g. Otto 2002, 44, who connects the motif with Neo-Assyrian royal ideology.

⁷⁵⁸ Granerød 2010, 335–336.

resemblance to the royal adoption formula of the Ugaritic text KTU 1.1 IV 13ff., discussed subsequently. But with regard to the topic of the divine weapon of the Storm-God, the verb תָּרַעַם should be noted, especially with regard to the suggestion by Kloos (1986), that רַעַם, invoking thunder, may be understood as a technical term for the power of the Storm-God.

With regard to the Storm-God's weapons, there is a text in 1 Sam. 31:10 which suggests that the dedication of weapons to temples was not unheard of, and it was thought to be practised at least among the neighbouring peoples:⁷⁵⁹

וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת-כְּלָיו בֵּית עֶשְׁתָּרֹת	And they set his [Saul's] weapons in the house of Astarte
וְאֶת-גּוֹתָוֹ תָּקְעוּ בַּחוֹמַת בֵּית שֵׁן:	And they fastened his body on the walls of Beth-Shean.

Kang has connected the above passage to the Apology of Hattusili III (46–47), in which the king places his weapon in the sanctuary of a goddess.⁷⁶⁰ According to Vidal, the placing of ordinary weapons in sanctuaries was one of the ways in which a weapon could be made into a prestige weapon, which is what the Aleppan weapons likely were. Several weapons of this kind (votive weapons, which may have been regarded as divine weapons) were actually found on the Levantine littoral. For example, golden axes were discovered in the Bronze Age Temple of the Obelisks at Byblos.⁷⁶¹ Prestige or votive weapons have also been found from the city of Ugarit, but whether an actual divine weapon was among them is difficult to ascertain. The Byblian temple was also dedicated to Astarte, giving the Biblical passage some archaeological context.

Outside of textual evidence, prestige weapons have been found in archaeological excavations in the area of Palestine, including one example even in a cultic context at Tel Dan.⁷⁶² In light of the texts and archaeological finds, both from the OB era and the 'Biblical' Iron Age, it would seem quite possible that divine weapons may indeed have been used in a similar fashion (i.e. to witness oaths, to affect judicial authority, and even to sanction military undertakings) also in the emergent monarchies in Israel and Judah. Mari also had political and commercial ties to Laish and Hazor already in the OB period, as witnessed by an

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. also David's taking of the sword of Goliath to the sanctuary of Mizpah in 1 Sam. 21:8–9. While it is difficult to ascertain the ethnicity of a weapon in the archaeological record, Biblical and Egyptian accounts seem to impress the heavily armed nature of the Philistines. Bloch-Smith 2003, 416.

⁷⁶⁰ Kang (1989, 221) referred to it as II:46–47, which is probably the same as §7:42–44. He quotes Hoffner's translation in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 30, 224–226: "The weapon which I wielded then I (afterward) dedicated and I placed it before the goddess my lady (= in her sanctuary)". What is more, the sign of the goddess Ishtar is employed in the cuneiform text.

⁷⁶¹ Vidal 2011, 248, 250; Jidejian 1992, 39.

⁷⁶² See Biran 1989. The find is a sceptre head.

unpublished economic text that mentions the cities of Hazor and Laish among the recipients of tin from Mari, in addition to Ugarit.⁷⁶³ The text ARM 12:747 also mentions migrant workers from Hazor, Carchemish, Emar, and Yamhad, testifying to the cultural interchange between the cities. The name of the king of Hazor in the text is Ibni-Adad, perhaps referenced by Jabin (יָבִין), king of Hazor mentioned in Josh. 11:1 and Jdgs 4:2, indicating that יָבִין הָדָד functioned as a dynastic name at Hazor. The king of Hazor is also mentioned in M.8140 and M.13041.

As to the archaeological evidence, in the area of Palestine there is no discernible discontinuity in the archaeological record between the material cultures of the NWS “Canaanites” of the Bronze Age and the “Israelites” of the Iron Age.⁷⁶⁴ It is also widely accepted that before the cultic centralization, there were many local shrines in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, so the question is whether any of these shrines or sanctuaries housed divine weapons in the sense that we find in the Mesopotamian and Syrian traditions discussed previously. There are indeed several prestige weapons which have been discovered in excavations in the area of Palestine, some even in cultic contexts.⁷⁶⁵ The actual weapon finds include daggers, javelin points and spear heads, blades and arrow-heads.⁷⁶⁶ No comprehensive study on the weapons (let alone prestige weapons) found in the area of Palestine exists. Nor have the weapons been systematically catalogued, but information on them has to be extracted from individual excavation reports.⁷⁶⁷ While weapons have also been found at virtually every site excavated, few have been published so far.⁷⁶⁸ Furthermore, in discussions of the weapons, the focus seems to be on the question of ethnicity and distinguishing

⁷⁶³ See Malamat 1971, 34; Pardee & Glass 1984, 93.

⁷⁶⁴ See Weippert 1988; Bloch-Smith 2003 for discussion.

⁷⁶⁵ E.g. Biran 1989 and the sceptre of Tel Dan (IAA 2008-1840). The sceptre head is all the more interesting for the fact that it resembles a forked lightning, while it has usually been interpreted as portraying a horned altar. Also relevant here is the vegetal sceptre head from Qiryat Shemona (IAA 2009-1461). There are also several sceptres from the Iron Age made either of bronze or bone, which are decorated with a pomegranate (i.e. vegetal) head. Such sceptres have been found, e.g. from Achzib, Tel Sera, Lachish, and Tel Nami. See Avigad 1989; Artzy 1990.

⁷⁶⁶ Bloch-Smith 2003, 418. Waldbaum 1978 has tabulated weapons found in Palestine between the 12th and 10th centuries, but the work is inarguably dated. She also categorizes as non-weapons objects which may have been used as weapons, such as axes, adzes, sickles, tridents, and picks. Albright (1934, 102–103) also discussed an inscribed clay tablet shaped like an axe-head found in Bet-Shemesh, which he connected with the inscribed adzes and hoes of Ugarit, suggesting that it might have been a votive or amuletic imitation of the same.

⁷⁶⁷ See Bloch-Smith 2003, 417 (fn. 55), for a list of individual publications. On p. 419 she also has a tablet of 12th to 10th-century weapon finds from Philistine and Israelite sites. Although these do not focus on votive or prestige weapons, see Yadin 1963; for a more recent overview of weapons in the archaeological record in the area of Palestine, see Rodriguez 2010 and Emery 1999.

⁷⁶⁸ Bloch-Smith 2003, 418.

between Philistine and Israelite material remains. A reconsideration of the extant evidence in light of the traditions discussed here on the uses of the divine weapons in the Syro-Anatolian area could, however, yield some interesting results.

What can be deduced from the review of the previous HB passages is that there seem to exist few direct textual parallels between the OB and Biblical texts when it comes to mentions of the Storm-God's divine weapons. But the Biblical passages do seem to draw from similar mythic imagery as the earlier traditions, making use of the shared iconic constellations of the Storm-God and his divine combat, which is also the context where we find the Storm-God's divine weapons portrayed in the iconographic sources.⁷⁶⁹ In particular, Pss. 2 and 89 contain a wealth of Amorite political language. The weapons of the Storm-God were *politically* significant owing to the Storm-God's position as the patron of kingship among the NWS peoples and to Aleppo's central position among the Syrian city states, the city having functioned as the international cult centre for the Storm-God for centuries. While there can be no direct parallel between the Mari texts from the OB period and Hebrew texts of the first millennium BCE, some texts do seem to indicate a shared cultural tradition, placing the Hebrew authors as the recipients of that tradition specifically. The connection between the Storm-God, the weapons, and the sea is a feature shared by the Mariote, Ugaritic, and Biblical traditions, making the weapons important in the examination of this symbolic constellation.

While the idea of the hand or the arm of Yahweh having been the weapon of the warrior-god of the ancient Hebrews is intriguing, it seems that these verses owe more to actual Mesopotamian royal legends, which seem to have been known to some Biblical authors, if the character of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8–10, 1 Ch. 1:10, Mic. 5:6) as an allusion to Sargon of Agade is anything to go by.⁷⁷⁰ But as I will discuss in subsequent chapters, it is the NWS Combat Myth that forms the background and the source of royal legitimation even in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, starting from the character of Sargon himself. While the letter FM 7 38 is the most famous witness to the Combat Myth from the OB Mari, there are

⁷⁶⁹ On the aspects shared by the NWS Baal and the Biblical Yahweh, see Herrmann 1999a, 138.

⁷⁷⁰ See Petrovich 2013 for references. The study contains some problematic presuppositions (such as Moses as the author of the Gen. text) and inaccuracies (see the discussion on the etymology of Babylon on p. 282), but the conclusion that Sargon is the likeliest candidate for the referent for Nimrod itself may well be correct. If Nimrod is an oblique reference to Sargon the Akkadian, the Sargon narrative has probably been mediated to the Palestinian authors by the Neo-Assyrian Sargonids.

also other textual witnesses from the city to the conception, as discussed in the following chapter. The Mariote witnesses to the Combat Myth are not restricted to mentions of the weapons of the Storm-God and the military campaigns to the Mediterranean, but may also include the OB practice of Ordeal by River.

4.4 The Combat Myth and Ordeal by River

This chapter features an excursus in which I discuss the OB Ordeal by River, references to which we find in several letters from the Mari Archives. The discussion is warranted by the use of the Combat Myth underlying these texts, and the implications that this information gleaned from the Mari texts have on the interpretation of later references to River Ordeals (e.g. in the Biblical tradition). The question of the River Ordeal, while somewhat peripheral to my main project, is a *case study* of how the Combat Myth may have been used in a real-world social context to legitimize the exercise of political power. It is important for the reason that an association between the Combat Myth and the OB Ordeal by River has previously been suggested, with the prior functioning as the justification for and ideological background of the latter.⁷⁷¹ The Combat Myth seems to be embedded in the concept of the Ordeal, and it is used as the legitimizing agent of the judicial practice. Examining the history of the Ordeal, one finds an expanding mythologization of the concept, which seems to have lost its connection with the practical judicial aspects of the Ordeal by the Middle Assyrian period, and which appears in a fully mythologized context in the Biblical texts.

In this chapter I also discuss how the proposed allusions to the River Ordeal in the Biblical texts may likewise feature this underlying mythology. I further reflect upon the curious absence of references to the tradition in the Ugaritic corpus, apart from the suggested connection to the Ordeal in the name of the Ugaritic god, “Prince Sea, Judge River” (*zbl ym, tpt nhr*), which early commentators (e.g. Montgomery) still seemed to believe were two separate adversaries of Baal.⁷⁷² My suggestion is that the Ugaritic epithet of “Judge River” served as a reference to a river – the Euphrates, the Ḫubur, the Orontes, or some other river – where the Ordeal had (perhaps only historically) been practised,

⁷⁷¹ E.g. Frymer-Kensky 1983, Annus 2012b.

⁷⁷² Montgomery 1935, 269.

while the reason behind its incorporation as a parallel title to “Prince Sea” was that the conquering of the river legitimized the king’s role as *judiciary*, just as his conquering of the sea legitimized his role as *sovereign*.

The Background of the Concept for the Ordeal

McCarter suggested in 1973 that the Hebrew word נָח may occur several times in the HB with the explicit meaning of the River Ordeal, and that there are several passages which may be better understood against the conceptual backdrop of the Ordeal.⁷⁷³ McCarter also posited that a link to the Ordeal by River can be found in the texts of the HB (*The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature*),⁷⁷⁴ which was also evidenced at Mari in connection with a river-god (G. Dossin: *L’ordalie à Mari*; Durand: *L’ordalie*).⁷⁷⁵ A similar observation was made by James Montgomery (*Ras Shamra Notes IV*),⁷⁷⁶ who found a “striking” parallel between the “River-Judge” of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and the legal provisions in cuneiform law, whereby disputed legal cases were presented to the river-god for decision by ordeal – even though the ‘striking parallel’ seems to be based on little else than the name of Judge River. The proposed connection is problematic, as we do not know why Baal’s adversary received this particular epithet or what it entailed.

The ANE River Ordeal is most familiar from the Amorite law-code Codex Hammurapi (§ 2). It is featured in the Mari letters, as well as in several Babylonian and Assyrian laws (e.g. MAL §§17, 24, 25), and yet it remains poorly understood. The laws of the Hammurapi code are contemporary with the Mari letters.⁷⁷⁷ Considered a form of divine arbitration, the Mesopotamian ordeal is believed to have functioned as a last-resort judgement, whereby legal cases that

⁷⁷³ McCarter 1973, 403.

⁷⁷⁴ McCarter 1973.

⁷⁷⁵ Dossin 1958; Durand 1988.

⁷⁷⁶ Montgomery 1935.

⁷⁷⁷ The second law of the Hammurapi code is the only text to suggest double ordeal, in which both the accused and accuser were meant to undergo the trial.

§2: *šumma awilum kišpī eli awilim iddimā lā uktinšu ša elišu kišpu nadū ana ʔID illak ʔID išalliamma šumma ʔID iktāšassu mubbiršu ʔE-sū itabbal šumma awilam šuati ʔID utebbibaššuma išalmam ša elišu kišpī iddū iddak ša ʔID išliam ʔE mubbiršu itabbal* / If a man has cast sorceries upon another man and he has not offered evidence (for it) he, upon whom the sorceries have been cast shall go to the River; he shall plunge into the River; if the River overpowers him, his accuser shall take away his house; if that man is cleared by the River and returns, he who cast sorceries on him shall be killed; he who plunged into the River shall take away his accuser’s house.

could not otherwise be decided were presented to the river, and in some ways it is an alternative form to arbitration by divine weapon (discussed in previous chapters). McCarter posited that the *primary function* of the divine River in Mesopotamian sources was to serve as a judge in certain legal cases.⁷⁷⁸

According to Frymer-Kensky, whose work on the Mesopotamian ordeal remains unsurpassed, the Ordeal by River was the most important suprarational form of trial in the ANE.⁷⁷⁹ Arbitration by the Ordeal and arbitration by the divine weapon of the Storm-God discussed in the previous chapter both seem to be rooted in the Combat Myth, and they are definitely tied into the judicial authority which belonged to the king's duties in the ANE.⁷⁸⁰ Therefore, I deem it necessary to discuss them in some detail, especially since there are certain Biblical texts which have been historically connected to Ordeal by River. While the discovery of the Mari letters has greatly increased our knowledge of the practice, one could argue that in some ways it is even less understood now than it was prior to their discovery, when more was believed than strictly known.

Before these Mari letters (ten in number) were discovered, and published by J.-M. Durand in 1988 (ARM 26 I/1), the River Ordeal was known mostly through OB and Middle Assyrian laws, discussed for example by J. Bottero in *L'Ordalie en Mesopotamie ancienne* (1981) and T. Frymer-Kensky in her 1977 PhD dissertation *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, in two volumes.⁷⁸¹ In addition to these laws, there exists a Sumerian law from Ur (U.7739 ii 3–12), which also dates to the OB period.⁷⁸² It must be stressed that older Sumerian legal codices, such as the Laws of Eshnunna, make no reference to the practice; its earliest mentions are thus dated to the OB period.⁷⁸³ Unlike the law of

⁷⁷⁸ McCarter 1973, 403.

⁷⁷⁹ Frymer-Kensky 1981, 115.

⁷⁸⁰ The king's social prerogatives of rights and duties are discussed by Bourdieu 1982.

⁷⁸¹ There is also another PhD thesis on the topic, A. Lieberman's *Studies in the Trial by River Ordeal in the Ancient Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.E.* (Brandeis: 1969), but this has not been available for my perusal.

⁷⁸² Gurney & Kramer 1965, 13–19. The Elamite Ordeal by River has also been studied by J. Klima, *Das Wasserordal in Elam* (ArOr 39: 1971); *L'ordalie par le fleuve en Elam* (RA 66: 1972)., and by H. Hirsch, *Zum Fluß-Ordal in Elam* (RA 67: 1973). However, Frymer-Kensky (1981, 115) considered these forms of the drinking ordeal, not Ordeal by River. Ordeal by River is also mentioned in laws § 13 and § 14 of the Laws of Ur-Nammu, the reasons being sorcery and adultery (the same reasons as those in the Code of Hammurapi), respectively. See Roth 1995, 18.

⁷⁸³ Note, however, that in the OB period, the Eshnunakeans went to Id for the Ordeal. Cf. TIM II 102, JCS 21. Also note Frymer-Kensky 1977a, who associates ^dIlurugu, featured in earlier Sumerian laws, with the Ordeal, although the first mention of the divinity is probably in the Hymn of Nungal mythic text. Here the name is a temple epithet or a term for a 'house of judgement', and the god of the same name may be a later development. See also Frymer-

Hammurapi, the Mari letters do not present laws suggesting an underlying practice, but instead demonstrate actual administrative reports and accounts of the practice being used in a variety of contexts.⁷⁸⁴

The laws pertaining to the River Ordeal, the most famous of which can be found in the Code of Hammurapi (§§2, 132), are prescriptive: they make mention of an offense and then prescribe the Ordeal as a solution to correcting the offence. For two different reasons, they do not offer a lot of information on the workings and specifics of the Ordeal. During the OB period, Ordeal by River was still very much a living practice, so it was likely assumed that judicial authorities, the people in charge of implementing the laws, knew exactly what was meant by the term used in the letters. By the Middle Assyrian period, the vagueness of the language and some actual grammatical problems⁷⁸⁵ used to refer to the Ordeal betray the fact that it was probably no longer practised, and that these references had simply been copied from earlier law codes.

The vagueness of the Middle Assyrian texts⁷⁸⁶ may also attest to the gradual disappearance of the practice. Furthermore, the vocabulary of the Ordeal begins to change in the Middle Assyrian period, taking on more mythological aspects. In the MA texts, the River (ID) is called *huršan* – which of course comes from the Sumerian *ĤUR.SAĜ*, ‘mountain’. The concept of the River Ordeal changes into a judgement of the dead, suggesting that the actual judicial ordeal had taken on a more abstract meaning.⁷⁸⁷ Albright discussed a commentary text on the so-called Babylonian Job (*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, SAACT 7), which mentions the “border of the river where the judicial case of men is examined”.

In this commentary, the border (*itē*) is explained as representing the *huršan*, which Albright interpreted as “the mountain in which men are judged after death, according to Babylonian conception”. He further described the belief, which I would assess as having represented Middle Assyrian conceptions specifically, writing that

the river in question is the River of Death -- which was not unnaturally conflated at

Kensky 1983, 139, where she discussed the meaning of the Sumerian term as a netherworld river.

⁷⁸⁴ Frymer-Kensky 1977b, 78, held that legal texts were frequently too obscure, ambiguous, or laconic to answer questions on function.

⁷⁸⁵ So Driver & Miles 1975 [1935].

⁷⁸⁶ Driver & Miles 1960, 308–311.

⁷⁸⁷ Frymer-Kensky 1983, discussed a text referred to as the “Marduk Ordeal”, which seems to offer a thorough mythologization of the concept. According to Annus 2012b, 25, the Marduk Ordeal refers to a historical situation when the boat carrying the statue of Bel was capsized during a procession of the Akītu festival.

various times and in various ways with the terrestrial Euphrates. It is on the bank of the River of Death that men are judged after decease, according to Babylonian conceptions. The transfer of the notion of trial by a river to ordeal by plunging into a river is very natural, though it is by no means impossible that the trial by ordeal in this way came first, and that the conception of the River of Death was modified by it.⁷⁸⁸

In fact, the extant textual evidence would seem to support the notion that the Ordeal came first, while the concept of judgement in the afterlife only followed subsequently. A connection between the River Ordeal and an underworld or “infernal” river was already made by M. Pope in 1955. Following Driver & Miles,⁷⁸⁹ he suggested that the Akkadian word *huršan(u)* was used for the River Ordeal in the 14th and 15th centuries BCE, three centuries after the destruction of Mari and its cultic sites.⁷⁹⁰ But where did the practice originate?

The Origins of the Ordeal

According to McCarter,⁷⁹¹ the earliest witnesses to Ordeal by River were Sumerian. While there is reason to believe that the Sumerian conception of the sea would have been rather different from that of the NWS peoples, it does bear examination whether a link could be established between the Judge River of the Combat Myth and the Ordeal or trial by river. But were the origins of the Ordeal actually Sumerian? While the oldest texts referring to the Ordeal appear to have been written in the Sumerian language, this may well have represented Akkadian or Amorite “legalese”, namely the use of a more ancient and authoritative language in the writing of laws, and it does not actually witness to Sumerian culture as the origin of the practice. The use of the Sumerian language in the writing of laws does not mean that such laws were indigenously Sumerian.

References to trial by river are indeed found in Sumerian laws (e.g. U.7739 ii 3–12⁷⁹²), which Gurney & Kramer dated to the Ur III “Neo-Sumerian” period (c. 1750 BCE, a period of Sumerian renaissance following the Akkadian empire period), roughly contemporary to the river ordeal at Mari, and centuries later than the first witnesses to the Combat Myth in the Sargonic texts. The

⁷⁸⁸ Albright 1936, 19–20.

⁷⁸⁹ Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 86–106.

⁷⁹⁰ Pope 1955, 60. McCarter (1973, 407) remarked that the name of El’s mountain is referred to in some Ugaritic texts with the borrowed Akkadian term *hursan*, which does suggest a connection between mountains and rivers.

⁷⁹¹ McCarter 1973.

⁷⁹² Published by Gurney & Kramer 1965, 13–19

Sumerian law (§10), concerning what seems to be adultery, reads:

TUKUM-BI	if
DAM GURUŠ-a-da	with the wife of a <i>guruš</i> -man
ÚR-ra	in the lap
NÁ-a	of lying
LÚ i-da-lá	a man he has accused
ÍD-dè	the river
ù-um-ZALAG.ZALAG	after/if it purified them
LÚ i-da-lá-[ra] ⁷⁹³	(to) the man he has accused
ŠUŠANA.ŠA [MA-NA-KÙ]	a third [of a mina of silver]
i-[lá-e]	he [will pay]. ⁷⁹⁴

It is on the basis of this law that McCarter, with no knowledge yet of the Mariote material, claimed a Sumerian origin for the practice. What is interesting is that the next law (§ 11), which is extremely fragmentary, seems to feature the word A-AB-[BA], ‘the sea’, on line 22, followed by a verbal form. The law seems to begin with TUKU[M-BI] NITAL[AM], possibly continuing with laws dealing with adultery. The appearance of NÍG- on line 21 may also point towards sorcery. The punishment or end result for whatever the infraction was seems to have featured something or someone being thrown into the sea. This cannot be a trial or ordeal here, as it appears at the end of the law, the normal place for the meting out of punishment.

In the Sumerian text called *Enlil and Ninlil* (also known by the name *The Begetting of Nanna*),⁷⁹⁵ reference is made to a “river of the netherworld, the man-devouring river”, an epithet which is repeated in the text several times. In the story, Enlil disguises himself as the river and copulates with Ninlil, and the act of their copulation is described with references to flowing waters. In the text, Enlil is referred to as the king whose decrees are unalterable. In another text, called *Enki, the Water God*,⁷⁹⁶ Enki is described as “king of the abyss, who decrees the fate”, showing that the connection between water and judgement was a Sumerian conception. A similar description of “king of the abyss” and “who well

⁷⁹³ Gurney & Kramer (1965, 14) reconstructed LÚ Ì-DA-LÁ-[A], “the man who was accused (of lying) with her”. It hardly makes sense for the accused man to have to pay the penalty after being cleared of charges. While the last sign is completely chipped off, a comparison to line 7 suggests that there is indeed an additional sign to line 10.

⁷⁹⁴ To parse the Sumerian in more comprehensible English, it would read something to the effect of: “If he has accused a man of lying in the lap of the wife of a *guruš*-man, should the river clear them, he will pay one third of a mina of silver to the man he (falsely) accused”.

⁷⁹⁵ BM 38600, CBS 8176, 8315, 10309, 10322, 10412, 13853, 29.13.574, 29.15.611, 8176 + 8315 + 13853, 10309 + 10412. Ni 2707. See Kramer 1944, 114 for sources and Behrens 1978 for composite text, score transliteration, translation, photograph, and hand copy. The most recent (German) translation is by Römer 1993.

⁷⁹⁶ CBS 29.15.38; Ni 4006; PBS X 2, 1; SRT 44; STVC 78-80, TRS 36. See Kramer 1944, 116. Cf. also Plate XIV for pictorial witnesses to the judging water-god Enki, seated on a chair or throne of judgement (Kramer 1944, 60 described him as “sitting in judgement” and “seated in judgement”).

understands the decreeing of fates” is given of the god in the text *Enki and the World Order*.⁷⁹⁷ The temple of Enki in Eridu was called the É.ABZU, the ‘house of the abyss’. Neither the river nor the sea, which Enki decrees as the domain of the goddess Sirara in the story, are hostile entities in Sumerian mythology, nor do they have adversarial relations with the storm-god Ishkur.

There is also a mythic text from Nippur, which has been dated to Ur III, called the Hymn of Nungal with the native title É U₄.HUS AN.KI, ‘the house (of) the furious storm (of) the world’, in which “the gods” oversee the Ordeal held at the Ekur temple. Frymer-Kensky interpreted this text as a witness to the judicial ordeal in Sumer.⁷⁹⁸ However, the hymnic text is not a witness to the historical practice,⁷⁹⁹ nor is the Ordeal its central topic. In the hymn, an unnamed god (DINGIR) stands witness to the Ordeal. While the sea played no special role in the conception of the universe for the ancient Sumerians, the river was another matter entirely. Reverence of the river is natural, considering the location of the Sumerian city-states along the Twin Rivers. Therefore, while the Combat Myth between the Storm-God and the sea seems to have clear Amorite origins, the eventual incorporation of the river into this mythology may contain more than a little Sumerian influence.

The river is not mentioned in the earliest iterations of the Amorite myth of Divine Combat, but the Euphrates was important, both politically and mythologically to the ancient Mariotes – although there is admittedly nothing to connect the river to the Amorite Combat Myth in the OB period. The connection between the sea of the Combat Myth and judgement by river has been pondered for a long time. While admitting that the connection baffled him, Albright suggested that “one may suspect that the Syrian personification is ultimately responsible. It would be very easy to combine two water-monsters with similar

⁷⁹⁷ For German translation, see Falkenstein 1956, 57–231. See also the PhD dissertation by C. Benito, *Enki and Ninmah and Enki and the World Order* [Ann Arbor, MI: 1969].

⁷⁹⁸ Frymer-Kensky 1977b, 78.

⁷⁹⁹ Frymer-Kensky (1977b, 78), however, argued that hymns and other religious texts can be used to “illuminate the social and juridical systems and institutions” of their given societies, and on p. 89 that there “does not seem to be any doubt that these hymns reflect an actual juridical situation”. While they may ‘illuminate’, we must be careful in using them to reconstruct practice. On p. 85, she uses a rather obscure passage to suggest that in the actual juridical ordeal the ordealists were not allowed to drown, as “Nin-Dimgul, the divine mooring pole” snatched a man from the river and brought him to Nungal in the mythic text. According to her, “it is possible that this allusion may be literal: that people were rescued from the river by having them grasp a mooring pole in order to be pulled from the water”. However, there are no other witnesses to such a practice and, according to the maxim, “one witness is no witness at all”.

characteristics”.⁸⁰⁰ Although he did not attempt to make any connections between judgement and the conception of rivers as dragons, this would certainly lend support to the understanding of the monsters defeated by Anat as representing Eastern Mediterranean water courses (discussed in section 5.1.3).

While the origins of the Ordeal may be (and, according to textual witnesses, likely are) Sumerian, in the OB period the practice of the Ordeal was centred in the Amorite city of Hit.⁸⁰¹ Thus, regardless of the putative origins of the concept, it was at least embraced, if not wholly appropriated, by the Amorites in this period. Whether or not the origins of water judgement were culturally Sumerian or simply connected with the pre-history of the Euphrates River, it seems that at some point the Amorites adopted the idea. Moreover, it was particularly for the Amorites that the Combat Myth was the underlying ideology which justified and legitimized the existence of the Ordeal. But how were the myth and the practice of the Ordeal connected?

The Ordeal and the Combat Myth

The explicit association of the myth with the practice of the Ordeal comes from a Neo-Assyrian text KAR 143+219.⁸⁰² The text, often dubbed the “Marduk Ordeal”, contains both cultic and mythic portions. It has been interpreted as containing Assyrian propaganda toward the Babylonians during and after the fall of Babylon in 689.⁸⁰³ Frymer-Kensky called the Marduk Ordeal “one of the best known, most discussed and least understood texts from Mesopotamia”. She noted that the text has also been interpreted as an Assyrian anti-Marduk parody written at the time of Sennacherib, which would make it analogous to the formation of the Exodus-narrative, discussed subsequently.

Frymer-Kensky further suggested that the historical occasion for the

⁸⁰⁰ Albright 1936, 20.

⁸⁰¹ What Frymer-Kensky (1977b, 89) seems to suggest is that at the time of the writing of the Nungal hymn, the practice was centred or centralized in Nippur, which not only served as the site of the Ordeal but also provided prison facilities for those convicted by ordeals and other trials. However, the OB evidence points to the city of Hit as the sole location of the Ordeal.

⁸⁰² This text is from Assur, but there is another edition from Nineveh: BM 134503–4+S.1903 features the same text but in a slightly different sequence. Frymer-Kensky 1982, 132.

⁸⁰³ Following von Soden 1955. Both von Soden and Frymer-Kensky 1983 contain editions and translations of the text, although the *edition princeps* was by W. Zimmern in *Zum babylonischen Neujahrfest* (BSGW 70/5: 1918). The text was also published by Livingstone 1989 (34 Assur and 35 Nineveh).

writing of the text was the return of Marduk's statue to Babylon in 668 by Esarhaddon's son Šamaš-šuma-ukin, and that it was written for the purpose of incorporating that historical event into the religious framework of the Combat Myth, as celebrated in the Akītu festival. Accordingly, she saw the text as "manifestly political".⁸⁰⁴ The celebration of the festival had been foregone between 689–668, partially as a result of Babylon's rebellion against Assyria during the reign of Sennacherib and its subsequent destruction.⁸⁰⁵ In the Marduk Ordeal text, Marduk (called ^dEN throughout) is held captive and a goddess (possibly Tashmetu) pleads to Sin and Shamash on Marduk's behalf, while his son, Nabu, searches for Marduk. On l. 6–7, unnamed persons are questioned at the *huršan*. Nabu goes to Borsippa; on l. 23, it is said that after "Marduk went to the *huršan*",⁸⁰⁶ the city revolted.

Frymer-Kensky argued that there is no ordeal in the text. It was traditionally read into the word *huršan* on l. 38, but she claimed that this is the only thing connecting the text to the concept of the Ordeal. There are five uses of the word in the text, and only two of them may reference an ordeal. She argued that the *huršan* found in the text is the name of the place where (the statue of) Marduk was taken.⁸⁰⁷ However, Frymer-Kensky does connect the text with the Babylonian New Year's festival, recalling a period "before Marduk's victory in which he was considered to be in the power of Tiamat", and claimed that the text was related to events in the Akītu house.⁸⁰⁸ The *huršan* where Marduk is held captive is a "cosmic location".⁸⁰⁹ While I think that Frymer-Kensky is correct in her belief that the text does not reference the actual historical ordeal,⁸¹⁰ even though some legal terminology is used in the text (cf. l. 18, where a case is opened before Aššur), *huršan* as a 'cosmic location' is on par with the abstraction of the concept of the river ordeal from the Middle Assyrian period onward. The fact that

⁸⁰⁴ Frymer-Kensky 1983, 140–141. The festival was re-instated two years later to celebrate Esarhaddon's son's ascension to the throne of Babylon. Nielsen 2012, 7.

⁸⁰⁵ Nielsen 2012, 6, 8.

⁸⁰⁶ L. 23: ^dEN *ina hur-sa-an il-lik-u-ni*.

⁸⁰⁷ Frymer-Kensky 1983, 138.

⁸⁰⁸ Mentioned on l. 38, 4, 66. In addition, l. 7 mentions the "house near the banks of the *huršan*" (É *šu-ú ina UGU šap-te ša hur-sa-an*), which could recall the proposed temple at Id. Frymer-Kensky (1982, 138), however, thinks that the mention of the house "clearly" indicates that the text is using the term as a name for a location rather than as a judicial term.

⁸⁰⁹ Frymer-Kensky 1983, 139.

⁸¹⁰ Von Soden (1955, 161), however, seems to discuss an ordeal myth, a myth in which Marduk is beaten and forced to undergo the Ordeal. Therefore, Frymer-Kensky's argument is a little mislaid.

the term is found in connection with the mythology of *EE*⁸¹¹ in the Neo-Assyrian period only bespeaks the Ordeal having become a thing of myth and legend by this time, but it does not follow that the concept of the Ordeal was not consciously invoked in this text.

Annus revisited the text of the Marduk Ordeal in 2010 and 2012, suggesting on the basis of the parallels of Babylonian processional omen texts⁸¹² that the Marduk Ordeal in fact recounts the capsizing of the boat transporting the statue of Marduk when it was *en route* to the Akītu house. The statue was seen as undergoing the Ordeal, which had “many consequences for how Marduk’s annual battle against Tiamat was interpreted”.⁸¹³ Among these changes was that Marduk’s victory was no longer seen as immediate, but rather resulting from a prolonged battle following Marduk’s imprisonment. According to Annus, in the Mesopotamian legal and religious world-view, victory in the Combat Myth – as well as acquittal in the river ordeal – both demonstrated “moral and physical fitness and superiority over the adversary”.⁸¹⁴

While this is a rather imaginative interpretation of the development of the narrative, Annus’ suggestion that the text used the technique of inverting the standard Babylonian creation epic for political purposes (describing Marduk as inferior to Assyrian deities) has merit.⁸¹⁵ Nilsen, for his part, mentions the meta-discourse of placing the events that took place during the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon into the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I of Babylon (who had ruled four centuries previously) as a way to support the dominant contemporary discourse between Assyria and Babylon. The mythic narrative was a part of Esarhaddon’s political programme to win popular Babylonian support for Assyrian rule, which required a means of expanding the discourse outside of the

⁸¹¹ *EE* is mentioned twice in the text: l. 34, 54.

⁸¹² These texts describe the condition and movement of the statue of Marduk during the Akītu festival. One of the omens states that if the boat (KI.MIN) used to transport the statue turns over in the river, there will be a revolt (*nabalkattu*). Annus 2010, 102. Based on this omen, Annus deduced that the Marduk Ordeal refers to a historical event in which the statue of Marduk fell into the river during the procession from the Ishtar gate to the Akītu house, leading to the divinity “involuntarily” undergoing the Ordeal.

⁸¹³ Annus 2012b, 25; 2010, 102–103. He suggests that the plunging of Marduk’s statue into the water “prematurely and unprepared” for his annual cosmic battle against Tiamat, representing both the sea and the netherworld river of Hūbur, lead to an “unusually harsh” combat being imagined between the divinities at that time.

⁸¹⁴ Annus (2010, 102) calls it the “spiritual meaning” of the myths.

⁸¹⁵ Annus (2012b, 25) dated the Assur text to the reign of Sargon II and the Nineveh text to Sennacherib. The older text reflects the historical situation in which the Babylonian pretender Merodach-Baladan opposed the Assyrian hegemony. The latter reflects a situation in which more kings (Elamite, Aramean, and Chaldean) had “joined the treacherous alliance against Assyria”. See Annus 2010, 102.

literate elite. Whether or not the capsizing of the boat was intentional, the performative discourse of the return of the statue and the re-institution of the festival during this time functioned to legitimize Esarhaddon's rule over Babylon.⁸¹⁶

The idea that the mythologies of the divine combat and the judicial ordeal became interwoven is also hinted at by the Ugaritic title of "Prince Sea, Judge River" and by the Biblical texts discussed subsequently. Both of the mythologies had an Amorite genesis and were propagated for the legitimation of the king's twofold political offices, judicial and executive. Some connection between the concepts of the river and judgement must have existed, even if it is not apparent to modern readers. The two are found in tandem, for example, in Dan. 7:10, where a fiery river issues from the throne of the 'Ancient of Days', who sits and gives judgement. Albright submitted that the appellation ought to be translated not as Judge River, but as "the judge, River". He was also among the early scholars favouring the association of the Ugaritic name with the Mesopotamian Ordeal by River, considering it an "almost perfect Accadian parallel".⁸¹⁷

Montgomery also drew attention to an Early Dynastic (EBA in Palestine) statuette excavated from Mari and published in *Syria* XVI, apparently inscribed with the Sumerian and Akkadian names for river (Idi-^dNârum).⁸¹⁸ If the dating of the statuette to c. 3000 BCE is correct, then Mari's close connection to the river would predate Zimri-Lim's kingdom and the texts of the Mari letters by at least a thousand years, which is unsurprising considering the geographic location of the city. It would similarly push back by over a millennium the date of the first mention of the practice of the Ordeal by River, if that is indeed what is referenced by the statue. While the dating of the inscription is not necessarily the same as the dating of the statuette, the combination of the inscription and the letters do suggest a Mariote (if not Amorite) origin for the Ordeal.

The inscription is located on the figure's back, across its left shoulder-blade. It is unclear whether the inscription names the figure itself or whether it is a votive gift with a dedication to the river or to the river-god. It does not appear that the statuette represents a divine figure, as it is devoid of any divine attributes. Bottero, for his part, seemed convinced that the city of Mari had housed a temple

⁸¹⁶ Nielsen 2012, 7.

⁸¹⁷ Albright 1936, 19.

⁸¹⁸ Montgomery 1935, 269.

for the river-god.⁸¹⁹ He was undoubtedly influenced here by the statue of the proposed god, Idi-^dNarum.⁸²⁰ Lambert, however, held that no temples of these numinous deities of Northern Mesopotamia are known to have existed – and they would not have according to him, as the river and the god of the river were one and the same, and the river itself would have thus served the purpose of the temple.⁸²¹ He also pointed out that in the official pantheon lists of Mari, the river has no temple.⁸²² However, this is only negative evidence for the absence of a temple in the city of Mari itself, not necessarily for Hit, where one would expect such a temple to have been located.

A peculiar connection between the god of the river ordeal and the Ugaritic texts comes from a dedicatory bowl from Mari (M.2241, also E1.10.11.2001), where ^dĪD is followed by ^d(G)eš-dar-ra-at:

DUMU.NITA	Heir
be-bu.BAD	(of) Bebu-BAD
RAŠ.GA	merchant
^d ĪD	River
^d (G)eš-dar-ra-at	Ishtar
SAG.TUG	(to them) he dedicated it.

The bowl features the names of ĪD and Aštarrat (*aš-dar-ra-at*). The dedication clearly pairs the divinities, as dedications to a pair of deities occur only rarely at Mari. Lambert argued that this suggests close union. He also pointed out that the vessel seems to have been rather valuable. It bears mentioning that the “Astarte of Mari” (*tttr mrh*) is a goddess mentioned by name in the Ugaritic snake charm KTU 1.100:34, which means that something of Mari religion must have been known in Ugarit, and possibly vice versa.⁸²³ According to Lambert, the Ugaritic

⁸¹⁹ Bottero 1981, 1029, 1052.

⁸²⁰ Curtis (1988, 8) seems to suggest that the example represents a personal name in the form of *I-ti* ^dNarum, “the River knows” or “Naru knows”. This interpretation seems plausible, as DN-^dDN is not a usual format for ancient Semitic names, divine or otherwise (whereas noun-DINGIR-DN is an ordinary Sumerian personal name format; e.g. Ur-^dNammu, “(hairy) man of Nammu”). If the Mari name was an Akkadized form of the Sumerian format, one would expect a noun rather than a verb in the first position, and so the name could have a meaning to the effect of “Hand of Naru”, which would be interesting with regard to the concept of the hand symbolizing the divine weapon. On the other hand, Ebla personal names follow the Semitic verb-^dDN pattern, which would allow Curtis’ interpretation of the name. But if we are dealing with a bilingual designation or divine name, it may not follow expected patterns anyway. Roberts (1972, 46) also pointed out a Pre-Sargonic attestation of the name Iddi(n)-Nâru (*i-ti*-^dĪD), “The River gave”. The personal name from Mari was discussed by Parrot 1935, 27 and Thureau-Dangin 1934, 142. While the interpretation of the first element is a matter of importance, what is proved by the inscription with absolute certainty is the concept of the divinized river existing at this time.

⁸²¹ Lambert 1983, 84.

⁸²² Lambert 1985a, 530.

⁸²³ Although Del Olmo Lete 2014, 42, suggests that the place-name is used in the text as the name of a traditional divine residence since Mari had lost its importance by the time the text was composed, seeming to assume that the text was composed around the time it had been written

term “Judge River” could have referred to the river ordeal as a judicial technique.⁸²⁴ The fact that the cities had relations makes the suggestion possible, if not outright plausible.

According to Lambert, the “obvious conclusion” to draw from these clues is that the river and Ashtarte were conceived of as husband and wife. While a conception of such a relationship between the gods is not unheard of, it is far from certain. Lambert connected the goddess to Ashtarte, *ʾttrt* of Ugarit.⁸²⁵ The Amorite inscription, written mostly in Sumerian, has usually been translated as “heir of Bebu-BAD, the great merchant of the river, dedicated to Ishtar”,⁸²⁶ but it is quite possible to read it as “heir of Bebu-BAD, the great merchant, dedicated to the River (and) to Ishtar”. The existence of the former dedication corroborates this interpretation of the text. It is also likely that *ḏ(G)eš-dar-ra-at* and *aš-ta-ar-ra-at* are variant spellings of the name of the same divinity.⁸²⁷ The inscription, on a stone vessel found in the temple of Ishtar, is dedicated to the king of Mari, Ikun-

down.

⁸²⁴ Lambert 1985a, 537.

⁸²⁵ Lambert 1985a, 535–536.

⁸²⁶ “Iku-Shamgan, King of Mari, Suwada the singer (?), son heir of Bebu-BAD the great merchant of the river to Eshdarat dedicated”. Parrot 1967, 239; Budin 2004, 106.

⁸²⁷ Budin (2004, 106–107) stated that the Eshdarat of the Mari inscriptions is the earliest occurrence of the goddess name Ashtar(a)t. She also mentioned the Ebla text containing the name *ḏaš-dar* as predating the Mari inscriptions by nearly a millennium, but she did not think it counts, due to a lack of the feminizing *t*-element (“which specifically distinguishes feminine Ashtart from her male companion and progenitor Ashtar, as well as her Eastern cognate Ishtar”), even though the name in the Ebla text is “clearly feminine” and the orthography does not yet “distinguish between Ashdar/Ishtar and Ashtart *per se*”. I do not find the argument convincing, especially in light of the unstable gender of Semitic languages (note that in found also in Hebrew are the forms *הַאֲשֵׁרָה* and *הַאֲשֵׁרָה* with regard to Asherah). In addition, it is likely that the root *atr/ašr* with a meaning relating to the concept of “shrine” (Pope 1972, 18; Tsumura 1993, 45–46, Albright 1925, 99–100; 1932, 192, suggested the meaning “sanctuary” for *atr*) is behind the name of the divinity (cognate with Akkadian *ašru* and Phoenician *ʾŠR* with the meaning of “holy place”), a suggestion which may find support in the appellation of the goddess *qds* of similar semantic content, although Watson (1993, 432) suggested that it would be cognate with the Akkadian *ašaru*, whose meaning has to do with organizing and controlling.

Thus far, the masculine-apparent but probably feminine *ḏaš-dar* is the oldest written occurrence of the name. Budin also suggested that the originally male Venus-god worshipped by the Semitic peoples was “ousted from the pantheon” by the newer Mesopotamian female version of the god, which seems unlikely, as Ashtar or Arsu was still known as a Venus-god by pre-Islamic South Semitic Arabs, especially in Palmyra. See Gray 1949, 73; Ingholt 1928, 42; Rostovtzeff 1932, 109–115. I would suggest that the originally and quite naturally bi-gendered astral divinity could be presented as either one being comprising both feminine and masculine aspects, whether outwardly male or female, or as a pair of divinities, male and female. The “double gender” of Ishtar was already demonstrated by Gelb 1938, 548; 1961, 150. Langdon (1914, 163) held that Ashratu and Ishtar are Western and Eastern forms of the same name and that the form with the infixed *-t* ending was common in the West. Considering that Ishtar and Yamm even share iconographic attributes (discussed subsequently), there must have existed a connection between the divinities which escapes modern scholarly understanding. Perhaps it was rooted in the double roles of Yamm as the master of the two seas, earthly and heavenly, and Ishtar as the morning and evening star.

Šamagan.

While the text Lambert presented in support of the connection between the goddess and the river-god (the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus) has more to do with the alternative title of Yamm from Ugarit, Judge River, Lambert suggested that the existence of the bowl should be a factor in deciding the problems in the fragmentary Egyptian and Ugaritic texts – a rather hazardous venture.⁸²⁸ Lambert also submitted that the river ordeal is mentioned in an Akkadian-Hurrian bilingual wisdom text from Ugarit (BWL 116:3 = RS 15.010).⁸²⁹ On lines 3–4 we read:

tá-me-e a-na na-ri ka-li a-pí-il ZI Who swears to the river is withheld a true heir
du-ri-iš mar-hé-ta-šu DUMU ú-ul i-šu forever to his wife a son there will not be.

The meaning of the lines is not entirely clear, but it would seem that if the text is a reference to the Ordeal, the cause of the Ordeal seems to be somewhat different from the other instances examined. One possible interpretation suggests that it presents a warning: if one uses the Ordeal to make false witness, the result will be infertility and lack of progeny. Swearing by the river could indicate a (discouraged or antiquated) legal practice, but the threat of having progeny withheld for using the river for arbitration seems ill-fitting considering the proposed potentially lethal nature of the actual practice. What is noteworthy is that in the Hurrian translation of the text, the river is not mentioned at all. Instead mention is made of committing perjury against the moon-god, which causes an heir to be withheld from the perjurer and his wife. In any case, we are not dealing here with a legal text or a text written in the Ugaritic language. It is difficult to ascertain where and when the text originated, although it would seem that the Akkadian text is the base text and the Hurrian text the translation.⁸³⁰ The text does not witness to a native Ugaritic practice.

Robertson suggested that there was an Akkadian river-god called Naru, who was primarily conceived of as a judge through the social character of the role it played in the river ordeal.⁸³¹ Lambert also held that the variation between the forms *íd* and ^d*íd* in BM 45690 IV suggests the reading *nāru*.⁸³² He wrote, “Thus not even the normal grammatical gender of *nārum* in Akkadian prevents the deity

⁸²⁸ Lambert 1985a, 537.

⁸²⁹ Lambert 1965, 11; Dijkstra 1993; Arnaud 2007, text 46; Cohen 2013, text 2.7. The editions contain slightly different readings. The text was found in the East-Archive along with other Hurrian religious texts.

⁸³⁰ For the most part, it is a rather literal translation at that. Dijkstra 1993, 170.

⁸³¹ Roberts 1972, 46. All well and good, but this still does not settle the question of whether the god’s name was pronounced *Id* or *Naru*.

⁸³² Lambert 1965, 11.

of the river ordeal from being male”.⁸³³ Undoubtedly the god was conceived of as male (and is explicitly mentioned as such in CT 4:50, which features the personal name ‘The-river-is-my-god’, *na-ru-um-il*).⁸³⁴ The Ugaritic name of Judge River may allude to the Ordeal by River, but the name is all we have to go by, and we do not know in what sense the name may have been associated with the practice. We do not even know whether a judicial official by the title of “Judge” was ever associated with the Ordeal in ancient Mari. A cognate term to the Ugaritic *ṭpṭ* (*šāpiṭum*) was used for the district governor at Mari, but whether that person was at the site of these Mariote ordeals is not corroborated by textual evidence. Although the view has found little favour in recent years, we should not completely abandon the enquiry into whether these apparently parallel epithets of the Storm-God’s adversary may have alluded to different social functions or political spheres to be conquered by Baal for the benefit of the mortal king. There is also no one-to-one correspondence between Ashtarrat and the Ugaritic Astart, and even less of a connection between ^dÍD and Yamm.⁸³⁵

While it is entirely possible that the Mariote or Babylonian tradition was known in Ugarit (word of such a peculiar tradition must have travelled), there does not seem to be any evidence indicating that it was ever actually practised in Ugarit or elsewhere on the Levantine littoral.⁸³⁶ If the Judge River of the Baal Cycle did refer to the Ordeal, it carried barely more than an allusion to it. Most likely, any connotation to the concept would have been symbolic in nature. But what do the other extra-Mariote witnesses to the Ordeal tell us of the practice?

⁸³³ Lambert 1985a, 535.

⁸³⁴ Bottero 1981, 1036, lists the form ^d*i-id*. The gloss *i-id* is also found in the Middle Assyrian laws, which Lambert argued does not prove that every instance of ^d*id* would have been read *id*. Syllabic spellings for *nāru(m)* can also be found (e.g. CT 4:50 *na-ru-um-il* and K 4721:2 ^d*na-rum*). Lambert 1965, 11.

⁸³⁵ A connection between Ashtarte and Yamm has been proposed even before; see the Astarte-Papyrus in the section on the myth of Divine Combat in the Egyptian texts. I will return to these texts in later sections.

⁸³⁶ Curtis (1988, 8–9) claimed that no clear evidence for the river ordeal exists in West Semitic sources. In light of the texts of the ‘West Semitic’ Mariotes (albeit written in a NWS dialect of East Semitic Akkadian), this is patently untrue, but what Curtis actually seems to refer to by “West Semitic” is Ugaritic and Biblical evidence. See also Smith 1994a, 236: “although the West Semitic evidence for the ordeal is weak”. Most of the evidence that we have for the Ordeal is, in fact, Amorite and thus ‘West Semitic’.

The Ordeal in Mesopotamian Legal Provisions

It seems that this very specific form of the OB Ordeal found in the Mari texts was no longer a living practice during the writing of these Middle Assyrian laws, although it is possible that the fact that the laws were still being codified – the fact that the concept or idea still existed in a code of law – may have meant that Ordeals of a similar nature could ostensibly have re-surfaced from time to time. There existed legal precedent for the re-appropriation of the practice. For example, there are Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian letters in which the River Ordeal is mentioned specifically in connection with land disputes (BBS I 14–17 iii 37–v 26; 66–7 iva 2–22, KB IV 168–169 2 6–9, ABL 965 r. 11–15),⁸³⁷ and it seems to be used as a judicial *ritual* more than a legal procedure employed to determine outcomes. While these letters are not prescriptive like the laws, at best they offer us vague information on its workings and details. From them, we can gather that a ‘tablet of the Ordeal’ (*tuppa ana huršan*) was written by the king to settle matters of land ownership. This phrase is found in the older Mari texts in a seemingly different context.

As for the legal witnesses to the Ordeal, the word *huršan* is used for the Ordeal in the three Middle Assyrian laws mentioned earlier (MAL §§17,⁸³⁸ 24,⁸³⁹ 25⁸⁴⁰),⁸⁴¹ and apparently it had become a technical term denoting “banks of the river as a place of trial for the dead”, and, subsequently, a method of “securing the acquittal (or conviction) of a person by the intervention of the holy river”.⁸⁴² The Babylonian laws preserved in *ana ittišu* (S. I 25–26) also contain a law (§5)⁸⁴³

⁸³⁷ Frymer-Kensky 1977a, 378ff. Note also the Elamite tradition of “going to the waters” (*ana mē illakma*) to settle land ownership. Frymer-Kensky 1977a, 186ff; Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 89–90.

⁸³⁸ *šumma awīlum ana awīlam iqtibi mā DAM-ka ittinikku šebutu lassu riksate išakkunū ana* ^{ID}I.ID *illukū*. // If a man has said to a man: “like a harlot is your wife”, (and) witnesses there are not, an agreement they will make and go to the river.

⁸³⁹ ...*ū ḥadima DAM-su ilakkū ū šumma ENÉ ki DAM-at LÚ ina bissu ištu DAM-[su] usbutuni i-[di] 3a-te iddan ū šumma ittikir la idīma iqabbi ana* ^{ID}I.ID *illūku ū šumma LÚ ša DAM-at LÚ ina bissu usbutuni ina* ^{ID}I.ID *ittura 3a-te iddan šumma LÚ ša DAM-su ina pañišu ramanša talduḍuni ina* ^{ID}I.ID *umalla...* // And if the lord of the house knew that the wife of man was in his house with his wife, he shall pay thrice. And if he denies it and says “I did not know”, they will go to the river. And if the man in whose house the wife of a man was staying refused to go into the river, he shall pay thrice. ...If the man whose wife before his face has run away from him has refused the river, he will be released and has fulfilled the complete river.

⁸⁴⁰ ...*ana riḫate DINGIR.MEŠ-ni ušituqu ubarrū ilakkū ana* ^dID.I.ID *ū mamite la iššabutu*. ... // Before the gods they will put the remains and take a claim, by the River or oath they will not be seized.

⁸⁴¹ For a more recent edition of the laws, see Roth 1995.

⁸⁴² Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 86–87.

⁸⁴³ *šumma aššata mussu izirma ul muti atta iqtabi ana nāri (ÍD(DA)-ŠÈ) inaddušu*. // If a wife has

which may refer to the Ordeal used in cases of adultery or marital discord. In Babylonian texts from Arrapha (EN II 7:24–26), which contain several references to *huršan*, the expression for the Ordeal is *ana nār huršan alāku/illaku* (perhaps also to be read *ana ^{īd/nār}huršan alāku/illaku*)⁸⁴⁴, “to go to the river *huršan*”. This does seem to connect the concepts – at least in 15th century Arrapha. Pope also mentions a bilingual or interlinear text⁸⁴⁵ where the Sumerian ^dĪD KUG.GA (which Driver & Miles and Pope translate as “pure river goddess”)⁸⁴⁶ has the Akkadian equivalent of *amēlu ina huršan zukkū*, “to declare a man pure by the river ordeal”.⁸⁴⁷

Peiser likewise referred to a goddess in his translation of a Babylonian syllabary, where he rendered *ina itē īdī ašar dien nišē ibbirru* as “on the banks of the river-goddess where the judgement of men is decided”, identifying *huršan* with “*itē ilatīdīm*”, which Peiser translated as the “banks of the holy river”.⁸⁴⁸ As the Sumerian *dingir*-sign denoting divinity is not actually gendered, the interpretation of *īdum* as a goddess must revert back to the gender of the Sumerian loan-word in Akkadian, which possibly took its gender from the homophonous Akkadian word *īdum*, hand (which could be construed both masculine and feminine), and had very little bearing on how the gender of the river or river deity was conceived. The word ‘river’ also features both genders in Semitic languages.

The word *huršan* is sometimes found with the determinative for ‘river’, and sometimes with the determinative for ‘mountain’ (e.g. Gilg. 48 i II). According to Driver & Miles and Pope, it referred to the cosmic mountain of the netherworld connected to the world-encircling ocean or river where the dead were

hated his husband and she says, “you (are) not my husband”, they shall give her/him to the river.

The verbal form does not allow for conclusions as to which party is given to the river. Driver & Miles (1960, 308–311) held that there are errors in the grammatical forms due to the original Babylonian text having been converted by Assyrian copyists, and they interpret the law as saying “If a wife has hated her(!) husband and says ‘Thou art not my husband’, they shall throw her(!) into the river”. Their interpretation does make sense in light of the next law (§6), decreeing what is to happen in the event that a husband says to his wife that she is not his wife.

⁸⁴⁴ Driver & Miles (1975 [1935], 87) favour their interpretation as determinative ideograms.

⁸⁴⁵ From the Babylonian records in the library of J. P. Morgan, cf. IV 20:59.

⁸⁴⁶ While it is true that in certain contexts ^dĪD can be interpreted as a feminine entity (e.g. ^dĪD AMA URU *zī-ba-ge* in KL 11:31, translated as “River, mother of the good city”, in which it is the word AMA, “mother” that allows us to discern the gender of the river, and BM 74329 where the river is the daughter of the sea), it does not follow that this was always the case. There is nothing in the context to suggest the gender of the river. The seeming association of the *huršan* with the river ordeal does make one wonder whether the goddess Ninḫursaĝ had any connection to it.

⁸⁴⁷ Pope 1955, 70.

⁸⁴⁸ Peiser 1890, 477–479.

judged, based on the text Akîtu 221–222.⁸⁴⁹ In Akkadian, it came to denote the place(s) of the River Ordeal or the Ordeal itself. The *huršan* was used of the Ordeal, especially in the texts from Nuzi dated to the 15th and 14th centuries BCE.⁸⁵⁰ While this does not prove that such an ordeal took place on the banks of any “sacred” river, Driver & Miles suggest that various texts featuring the compound *nār^hhuršān* and the simple term *huršan/hursan* appear to make the meaning unmistakable.⁸⁵¹ According to Pope there is also no doubt that it refers to the Ordeal.⁸⁵² Smith suggested that *^dhuršān* was actually the divinized River Ordeal, as opposed to the divinized River, *^dID*.⁸⁵³ Note, however, that the river is not mentioned as a god in the pantheon-lists of Mari.⁸⁵⁴

According to Driver & Miles, the Middle Assyrian references to the Ordeal present a number of difficulties due to the vagueness of their language, which assumes that the reader would be familiar with the practice. Driver & Miles also remarked on the paucity and obscurity of references to the Ordeal outside of the Middle Assyrian documents.⁸⁵⁵ While they seem to be unaware of the Mari material, this new evidence seems to have done relatively little to shed light on the issue. It is also uncertain how familiar the Assyrian of the 15th century would have been with this 18th-century practice, which seems to have dwindled with the destruction of Mari, even if McCarter does claim that the practice was a “widespread phenomenon”.⁸⁵⁶ Exactly how widespread the phenomenon actually was, however, remains unclear. The vagueness of the Middle Assyrian texts may also attest to the gradual disappearance of the actual practice. The extra-Mariote witnesses create a context for the references to the Ordeal found in the Mari texts, which have greatly increased the information available on the concept.

⁸⁴⁹ Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 86; Pope 1955, 69.

⁸⁵⁰ There are 11 texts in which Ordeal by *huršan* is mentioned: AASOR 16: 74, 75; HSS 9:7, 13:310, 422, 14:8; JEN 124, 125, 631; SMN 855, 3557. According to Frymer-Kensky (1981, 122–123), it was used for both personal and property disputes, like theft and burglary. In land disputes, litigants could opt for the *huršan* trial if the decision of the judges was unacceptable to them. Ordeal by oath seems to have been more common in Nuzi. On this ordeal, see Driver & Miles 1940 and Frymer-Kensky 1981, 122–125.

⁸⁵¹ Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 87.

⁸⁵² Pope 1955, 69.

⁸⁵³ Smith 1994a, 236.

⁸⁵⁴ Lambert 1985a, 526–527, 532.

⁸⁵⁵ Driver & Miles 1975 [1935], 86. McCarter (1973, 407), on the other hand, boldly states that the “legal procedures in question are well known to students of Assyriology”. On p. 412, he also claims that the concept of judgement by river ordeal was something shared by Israel with Mesopotamia, which overstates the evidence.

⁸⁵⁶ McCarter 1973, 403.

The Ordeal in the Mari Texts

Unlike most of the other OB witnesses to the Ordeal, the letters from the Mari archive are descriptive. Although contemporary to the laws of Hammurapi, they are not laws. They do not even reference laws. They are actual administrative reports and accounts from the scene of the Ordeal. They are letters from people who witnessed an Ordeal first hand and were reporting back from it. This is why they present us with unique insight into the concept of the Ordeal, allowing us to deduce some facts about its function: all Ordeals of the OB period seem to have taken place in one specific location: the city called Id.⁸⁵⁷ In the OB period, the River Ordeal was not in fact practised on all rivers, only the Euphrates. Furthermore, it was not practised just anywhere along the Euphrates, but in this one, very specific location. The city was located on the western bank of the Euphrates, roughly half-way between Mari and Babylon, where we find the modern Iraqi city of Hit today.

The city was a major point of tension between Babylon and Mari (which can be seen, e.g. in the texts ARM 26:160 and 468), with ownership of the city being contested between them for over half a decade. This was not least because of its strategic location, but also because of its wealth of bitumen wells, which were used in the building of Babylon.⁸⁵⁸ Troops from both Mari and Babylon were situated there, but at least during Zimri-Lim's reign it seems to have been considered Mari territory. The importance of the city is witnessed not only by the fact that its ownership seems to have been the single biggest, ongoing point of contention between Hammurapi and Zimri-Lim (cf. ARM 26:40, 449, 468, 499), but that in the letters we have several mentions of foreign parties coming to this Mariote city to engage in this curious judicial practice. Kings from outside of Mari could – and demonstrably did – send troops and officials to oversee their own people undertake the Ordeal (ARM 26: 253, 254, 255, 256).

The cuneiform for the name of the city and the word 'river' are the same. In fact, when it comes to the River Ordeal, the terms ID (or A.ENGUR), ^DID, ID^{KI}, and ^DID^{KI} (e.g. in A.457:33) seem to be used interchangeably. According to Heimpel, the city of ID was one of the few cities along the Euphrates named after

⁸⁵⁷ Heimpel 1996.

⁸⁵⁸ Heimpel 1996, 8; Sasson 2001, 331.

its principal god,⁸⁵⁹ even suggesting that the city may have originated as an example of the ancient “temple city” (i.e. a city that grew up around a temple complex).⁸⁶⁰ Such cities seem to be a Northern Mesopotamian particularity, according to Lambert, who held that the numinous character of geographical features is commonly attested there. He states that unlike Northern Mesopotamia, the Southern Sumero-Babylonian culture had few cities bearing the name of the local god.⁸⁶¹ But the numinous character of geographical features was not limited to sites of later urban settlements, as several mountains and rivers in Northern Mesopotamia were also thought to have divine characteristics. He additionally pointed out that the concept of a numinous mountain was also known in many Eastern Mediterranean cultures (e.g. Mount Saphon, i.e. classical Mount Casius, modern *Jebel al-Aqra*) of Ugarit. These Western numinous mountains were not considered gods in themselves, but rather served as the seats of gods.⁸⁶²

It bears noting that there existed some variation in the writing of the name of the city of Id. The form ^dENGUR *ki* or ^di₇ *ki* has both the Sumerian determinative for ‘god’, the *dingir*-sign, as well as the determinative for a place-name. Forms such as *i*₇ *ki* and *i*₇ were also used. It would seem that in the text KAV 65 r, ii 2, the form ^dÍD^{ki}, while containing the determinative for a place-name, actually designates the name of the god. There seems to have been no rule as to whether the *dingir*-sign should be attached to the name of the city or to the Euphrates River. Whenever the river ordeal is mentioned, forms such as ^di₇, ^dÍD are used, and it would be easy to contend that it did have something to do with a river-god or divinized river.

We ought to be careful reading too much into the determinatives, however. Perhaps it was done out of respect for the river, or the form may have been archaic even at the time of the writing of the OB texts. In one letter (ARM 26:253), the river itself is also simply called “god”, *ilum*/DINGIR, with the river and god being explicitly associated. The text reads *ina ilim ipšum*, “he solved in the god”. The text does not feature a determinative and the word for ‘river’, merely the word for ‘god’ which is considered to be the river. Whatever the case, the Mari letters suggest that ^dÍD had a strong Mari connection. And according to Lambert, the term alluded more to the river ordeal than to any geographical

⁸⁵⁹ Along with Yabliya and Hanat, a peripheral city of the Mari kingdom.

⁸⁶⁰ On temple economies, see Makkas 1983.

⁸⁶¹ The city of Nippur (EN.LÍL^{ki}) forms a notable example to the contrary.

⁸⁶² Lambert 1983, 84.

river.⁸⁶³ Speiser, on the other hand, believed that the Akkadian *id* (“when so pronounced”) did contain a specific cultic bearing, especially in the Assyrian Laws.⁸⁶⁴

The Mari letters mentioning the Ordeal, ten in all, were sent to Zimri-Lim. Accordingly, they were found in the royal archive. The senders of the letters were:

Meptum 26:249, 251, 253, pasture-chief in Suhum, guard of crossing
Yaqim-Addu 26:252, 254, governor of Saggaratum
Ibal-Pi-El 26:250, pasture-chief, military commander
Yasim-Dagan 26:251, military officer (?)
Ishi-Dagan 26:255, envoy
Zu-Hadnim 26:256, envoy
[PN] 26:257, 258

What we can observe in the letters is that none of them were sent by the regent of Id or by any judiciary official stationed at the city with a permanent position of overseeing Ordeals. Most of the authors seem to be military correspondents of Zimri-Lim who were either passing through Mari or just happened to be there when ordeals took place. None were religious personnel, and in fact no religious functionaries are mentioned in the letters in connection with the Ordeal.

As for the probands or “ordalists”, which is to say people who were either forced or voluntarily undertook the Ordeal, the letters witness to the following numbers:

80 Emarites of high rank
9 individual women +4 intended female probands
3 young boys
2 Elamites, n Hananeans
1 elder man
1 individual man (+1 possible individual man)
1 young girl

From the letters it is possible to infer that most of the reported ordalists were not local. Male ordalists outnumber female ordalists, but the number of females is still relatively high. Most of the female ordalists were not accused of anything, but had to stand witness. The number of children and elderly is low, but statistically significant. There is only one free man among the ordalists, and he is unnamed (‘brother of Hammu-Kuna’). From these facts we can conclude that most ordalists came from groups whose capacity for making oaths was weakened or non-existent (with the exception of the elders of Emar, who have been interpreted as ‘high ranking’, but they were also foreigners and not locals).⁸⁶⁵ If the elders were to be interpreted as ‘old’, then this category would also display a compromised ability to make an oath.

⁸⁶³ Lambert 1985a, 535.

⁸⁶⁴ Speiser 1955, 10.

⁸⁶⁵ Durand 1990, 56.

People who successfully completed the Ordeal were sometimes sent to the king of Mari for further questioning, perhaps due to the principle of “*din napištim ana šarrim*”, according to which litigation over life belonged to the king: the king *personally* had to decide all of the cases that would result in loss of life. The foreign kingdoms of Elam and Yamhad sent their own parties with their own probands. Something called the ‘tablet of the king’ was required to be read at the Ordeal, and this was especially important for the foreign parties. The king’s officials, agents and secretaries were present at Ordeals, and the king personally inquired about the resolutions of the ordeals. What brings us back to the use of the Combat Myth in the legitimation of monarchic authority is this direct royal involvement in cases, as the state also needed these crimes with inadequate inquisitorial or evidentiary procedure to be resolved. But in these cases, it was the authority of the king that legitimized the divine judgement. As a form of divine arbitration, the River Ordeal is believed to have functioned as a *last resort judgement*, whereby legal cases that could not otherwise be decided were presented to the river. While this may or may not have been the case, the ancient Mesopotamians also had other means of litigating such cases. Some of these featured the divine weapon.⁸⁶⁶

As to the reasons for undertaking the Ordeal, Durand⁸⁶⁷ categorized the Ordeals into four types: accusations of adultery, sorcery, treason, and material concerns. In the letters, the reasons given for the undertaking of the Ordeal are: three cases of confirming the truth of a statement, to cases of an oath (sorcery), a case of giving witness (adultery, murder, possibly paternity), a claim (land, territorial dispute), and a case concerning the silver of the goddess Ba‘alta-Matim (26:256). It is difficult to ascertain from the letter what exactly had befallen the silver of the goddess. It is possible that a question of the truth of statements also underlay this case. What can be deduced from the letters is that one of the main functions of the Ordeal was confirming the statements, witnesses and oaths of persons whose word was for one reason or another considered as holding less power than of the ‘*awīlum*’ man, with whom other forms of arbitration could be used. This could be due to reasons of gender, age, social class, reputation, or prior infractions.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁶ Rede 2003, 169–170.

⁸⁶⁷ Durand 1989.

⁸⁶⁸ Frymer-Kensky 1981, 126, claims that it was at the discretion of the judges to determine how

For example, one case includes a woman who was a murder witness, but because she was a woman, her witness statement had to be confirmed by undertaking the Ordeal (26:254). In only one case (26:250) the Ordeal *may* have been used for bilateral divine arbitration between two parties, but it is not certain that the two cases in the text are connected. Note, however, that in the code of Hammurapi, it is precisely the *awīlum* man for whom this form of arbitration by river was prescribed. However, we must contend with the fact that the Babylonian laws are a theoretical construct and we have no witnesses of a single Babylonian having undertaken the Ordeal during this period. Therefore, it is unknown how closely the law resembled actual practice. But what do we factually know about the Ordeal?

The Causes and Function of the Ordeal

Because of the specific case of the River Ordeal mentioned in the Code of Hammurapi and its association with the *Iudicium Dei* of medieval Europe, the River Ordeal has a strong association with sorcery; although to claim that the European so-called “Ordeal of Cold Water” dealt solely with sorcery is a gross misrepresentation of the evidence.⁸⁶⁹ According to recent research,⁸⁷⁰ the medieval Ordeal was a process that was intended to determine the guilt or innocence of the proband, not through divine intervention but by the observance of the clerics who administered it. Unlike the stereotypical image associated with medieval witch hunts, few women were actually forced to undergo the Ordeal of submersion. This was because of the higher ratio of fat to water in female bodies (a lean male body was more likely to be submerged during the Ordeal). It must also be emphasized that the Ordeal itself was not meant to kill the proband. As many of the offences or situations it was prescribed for were not even capital crimes, more probands would have been found guilty, and it has been suggested that the Ordeal was actually meant to find the innocent and acquit most people who chose to undertake it.

Rather than being a form of divine judgement, the Ordeal was a process

compelling a witness was.

⁸⁶⁹ Discussed, e.g. by Bartlett 1983.

⁸⁷⁰ Leeson 2012. See also bibliography.

through which the examiner could discern from the behaviour of the proband whether he or she was guilty or not, and then rig the resulting ordeal accordingly. This is why the ordeals of hot water and scalding iron were used more often with female probands.⁸⁷¹ Acquitting them through these ordeals was easier. This practice, which ended in the 13th c. after being banned by the Lateran Council in 1215, probably influenced the later Early Modern-era European superstition or folk belief that witches could not sink.⁸⁷² In fact, sorcery is mentioned in two Mari letters (26:249, 253), and adultery is alluded to in two (26:251, 252). In both cases, the accused are women. Yet it cannot be claimed that punishing sorcery was the main or even a major function of the Ordeal, nor that sorcery was a particularly feminine enterprise. Furthermore, the Ordeal had no sociological function to punish sorcery in these cases, but to *confirm truth statements*. Those found guilty of the malicious use of sorcery by means of the Ordeal were most likely punished or executed by the usual methods of the time – which is also what took place later in Europe, where it was actually possible to hire someone to take

⁸⁷¹ El-Barghuti 1922 discussed a similar ordeal among the Bedouin of Palestine in the early 20th century. While temporally very distant from the ancient Mariotes, it may still closely resemble the Amorite tribes in terms of social organization. On pp. 5–6, he explains that the judges “have full authority to increase or reduce a penalty, always taking into consideration the common welfare and the personal influence of both parties. [...] The Judge must know the social position of the offenders and their family exactly. [...] Sometimes a judge cannot decide a case, because it is too complicated. In this event he sends somebody secretly to reconcile the parties. If he does not succeed, he postpones his decision until he discovers the right one with the help of some other judge who must proffer his advice”. On pp. 15–16 he described the conditions upon which an accused person may be appointed a lawyer: their *inability* to defend themselves, that either party is a *woman*, when plaintiff and defendant are of *unequal* social rank, and when both parties are “still in a very *excited state*”, when the accused is *ashamed* of appearing before the assembly due to the nature of the crime, and when “a party is composed of a *number of persons*, so that it is difficult to hear them all”. This list seems to cover all of the cases for the use of the Ordeal for arbitration in the Mari letters. On pp. 20–21 El-Barghuti described the proceedings of giving an oath of guiltlessness (“Generally none but the powerful have the right to take the oath”) and the payment of reparations in the case no reliable witnesses exist to decide the case, adding an interesting detail that if one of the persons of the family of the accused is absent, “a rifle, held by one of the *muzakkîn*, takes his place”, which may recall one of the functions of the divine weapon.

Also interesting are the ancient Semitic echoes found in the oath itself: “By the great God [...] who deprives children of their fathers and makes women widows, who vanquishes kings, who subdues oppressors [...]”. On pp. 21–22 El-Barghuti finally describes the Ordeal by Fire, used in cases where arbitration has failed and taking an oath is not an option: “A piece of iron, or a coffee-roaster, is heated until it becomes red-hot, whereupon the suspects, one after the other, come forward to lick it with their tongues [...] Everyone who undergoes the Ordeal must pay a fee of 500 piastres for the privilege [...] Originally this custom may have been introduced to frighten people, and force them to speak the truth. Many a man who feels his guilt tries secretly to find someone to arrange the matter with the accuser before being brought to the Ordeal by fire”. One important thing to note about the Bedouin ordeals is that again they are not a means of punishment but of arbitration; if the result of the Ordeal is capital punishment, it is imposed by other means after the judgement is obtained. Furthermore, capital punishment is only one of the possible penalties, as the others include blood-money or wergild, banishment, or the payment of indemnity (like for like).

⁸⁷² See Zguta 1977. Bartlett 1986, 53.

one's place in the Ordeal.⁸⁷³

Regarding the topic of the Combat Myth, it seems that the river ordeal was at least partially used for political purposes in Mari, as evidenced by the fact that it was used to determine guilt regarding treason. It also seems that officials or “experts” of some kind often attended or watched over the process of the Ordeal, as in A.457.⁸⁷⁴ But the river of the Ordeal was not conquered or defeated by a god (or a king); it served as an instrument of divine retribution. It seems that at least in Mari the river ordeal was connected to the king and his judicial power. The causes for the use of the Ordeal not only included sorcery (A.457 37–39), which was the only reason given for the Ordeal in the law of Hammurapi, but also murder (King of Justice) and adultery (A.457 40–41). In addition to these, in the Mari texts we find the Ordeal also being used for cases of treason (A.457 39–40) and the solving of territorial conflicts (A.457 1–30, A.1251).⁸⁷⁵ The ordeal was also employed with prisoners of war. It may have served an important cultic function, being a public display of the king's judicial power. The Mari texts even preserve a letter in which the king himself addressed the river (ARM 191:1), indicating a ritual.

As for the actual functioning and proceedings of the Ordeal, they remain as murky as ever. What is known is that a tablet was recited, containing the witness statement of the ordalist (26:254). Some type of ritual involving pouring water on the hand of the ordalist was involved (26:254). And at least on one confirmed occasion, the Ordeal took place at dawn (26:254). The terminology used to describe the Ordeal consists of the verbs *alākum*, ‘to go to the River’, *pašārum*, ‘to resolve’, *ipšum*, ‘to solve’, *rehūm*, ‘to spit out’, *wašūm*, ‘to come out’, and *šalāmum*, ‘to come out safe’. What the verbs signified as technical terms is difficult to ascertain, although some suggestions have been made, the most popular of which claims that the ordalist had to swim to the other side of the river (or to traverse a set distance under water).⁸⁷⁶ In only one letter (ARM 26:253) is it explicitly stated that the ordalist “fell into the god and died”.

While it is often assumed that the way the Ordeal functioned was a simple case of ‘sink or swim’,⁸⁷⁷ in actuality death is only mentioned as an outcome in

⁸⁷³ Bartlett 1986, 13ff.

⁸⁷⁴ Michel 1990, 203–204.

⁸⁷⁵ Durand 1998,

⁸⁷⁶ See McCarter (1973, 8) for withstanding the rushing waters; Bottero (1981) for staying afloat a measured distance; Durand (1988) for swimming a set distance under water (based on A.457).

⁸⁷⁷ “Witch dunking” is often recounted as the classic Catch-22 or ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ situation. Cf. e.g. Clive Aslet, *Villages of Britain* [London: 2010], 281.

one letter. Such a special mention implies that it was not the usual outcome, while the fact that her death did not seem to not settle the case anyway suggests that this was something of an anomaly. In fact, in five out of six confirmed cases the ordealist survives, which is on par with statistical analyses made of the later European ordeal.⁸⁷⁸ In the end, however, it is not known exactly what took place during the actual implementation of the Ordeal. Lambert, for his part, was convinced that the Ordeal took place in a river, either in the Euphrates or in the Ḫubur. The Euphrates is explicitly mentioned as the place of the Ordeal in King of Justice (BM 45690 III 21–IV 23), a text which Lambert described as the “most detailed and vivid account of a river ordeal from ancient Mesopotamia”.⁸⁷⁹ According to him, the Ḫubur River, with its known nether-world associations may actually have served as the place of the Ordeal at Mari.⁸⁸⁰ In the period of the King of Justice text, it seems that a specific place had to be used for the Ordeal: the accuser and the accused were sent under guard along the Euphrates to a spot upstream from Sippar (BM 45690 III 22–23).⁸⁸¹

Based on the terminology and some possible later references to the Ordeal,⁸⁸² the safest assumption would be to infer that going *into* the river was somehow involved. It is important to note, however, that “going into the water” does not necessarily refer to an Ordeal by River. As Frymer-Kensky pointed out, non-royal grants, adoptions and divisions (but not sales or royal grants) could be contested, according to Elamite texts, by going to the water (*ana mê illakma*). This is a reflection of an accepted legal procedure whereby the plaintiff either initiates or substantiates a claim by going into the water, perhaps symbolically.⁸⁸³ However, Heimpel⁸⁸⁴ has offered some interesting alternative ideas of how the Ordeal could have proceeded; according to him, even though the city of ÍD and its god were named after the concept of the river, the River Ordeal was not located at the “wholesome waters of the Euphrates”, but at the bitumen wells or springs near the city of Id (^dENGUR^{ki} in the Mari texts; e.g. A.457:33), where a cluster of such wells still remains.⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁷⁸ Leeson 2012, 705ff.

⁸⁷⁹ Lambert 1965, 4.

⁸⁸⁰ Lambert 1985a, 535.

⁸⁸¹ Lambert 1965, 4.

⁸⁸² Frymer-Kensky 1977a, 186ff.

⁸⁸³ Frymer-Kensky 1981, 117.

⁸⁸⁴ Heimpel 1996.

⁸⁸⁵ Heimpel 1996, 8. Curiously, bitumen (*esir*) and ^dÍD are associated in BM 6060, a tablet from the Kassite period in the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, which could at least

These wells are circular ponds filled with naphtha, a volatile variety of benzene, making the warm saline water of the springs highly toxic.⁸⁸⁶ Heimpel suggested that the people undergoing the Ordeal plunged into these wells where, scalded, they had to “endure chest-gripping temperatures”. Upon inhaling the noxious gases or imbibing the toxic water, they would have “been overcome quickly, lost their consciousness, lapsed into a coma, and died”.⁸⁸⁷ One of Heimpel’s arguments for the River Ordeal taking place in the bitumen wells is their apparent power to sometimes push out the people submerged in them,⁸⁸⁸ a display of the god’s divine power to absolve the accused. Or, according to Heimpel, “the god not just stated, he emphasized, the truthfulness of the statement of the ordalist”.⁸⁸⁹ So what actually happened during the Ordeal?

The Ordeal by River

McCarter seemed to take it for granted that the Ordeal featured the plunging of the accused into the river, where their success in withstanding the rushing waters determined their guilt or innocence.⁸⁹⁰ He also claimed that the divine river served as a final litigant in the kind of legal cases where the normal adjudication between defendant and plaintiff was seen as having reached a stalemate.⁸⁹¹ There is little evidence to suggest that Ordeal by River was ever a *common* feature of ANE judicial arbitration. That the judicial function of the river was still known during the first millennium BCE, although likely no longer practised, is witnessed by a text known from several recensions that Lambert called “The River

tangentially support Heimpel’s theory. Tukulti-Ninurta II’s inscription records the king staying a night by the city of Id, “at the bitumen spring, where the stele of the great gods is erected” (A.O.100.5:60). The fact that they did not cross the river to stay in the city itself suggests that the crossing was no easy matter.

⁸⁸⁶ Note also Strabo’s description of an undisclosed location near the Euphrates: “there is a fountain of this latter asphalt near the Euphrates River; and that when this river is at its flood at the time of the melting of the snows, the fountain of asphalt is also filled and overflows into the river; and that there large clods of asphalt are formed which are suitable for buildings constructed of baked bricks [...] The liquid kind, which they call naphtha, is of a singular nature; for if the naphtha is brought near fire it catches the fire; and if you smear a body with it and bring it near to the fire, the body bursts into flames; and it is impossible to quench these flames with water (for they burn more violently), unless a great amount is used, though they can be smothered and quenched with mud, vinegar, alum, and bird-lime”. *Geography* 16.1.15.

⁸⁸⁷ Heimpel 2003, 9; 1996, 8–9.

⁸⁸⁸ Heimpel 1996, 8.

⁸⁸⁹ Heimpel 1996, 10.

⁸⁹⁰ McCarter 1973, 403.

⁸⁹¹ McCarter 1973, 407.

Incantation”,⁸⁹² even though it seems more like a hymn addressed directly to the river. In K.2782 the river is addressed: “You judge the judgement of mankind” (*di-in te-né-še-e-tum ta-din-ni*). A variant exemplar (CBS 344, pl. 70) reads in the same line “You accomplish the judge<ments> of Ea, judgement takes place [b]efore you” (*ga-me-ra-te di-<in>* ^dE.A [m]*a-har-ki di-ni*).

An important facet of this text is that, like the Biblical texts I will discuss shortly, it witnesses a survival of the ordeals and the judicial function of the river in poetic memory, long after they were no longer actively practised. There is one late non-mythological mention of the river ordeal in the Babylonian area: it is mentioned in a 6th-century letter from Uruk in the context of royal anger in a legal case (YOS XXI, 149): “the king is furious with all of Babylon, he has not listened to my statements, my witness has not proven (or testified) in my case and I have not yet undergone the river ordeal”. It is the only non-literary witness to the use of the Ordeal in the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, although we do not know whether it refers to a symbolic ordeal or to the actual judicial practice.

Bottero, one of the first to remark on the concept of the river ordeal, believed that the Ordeal did involve plunging into the river, but that different procedures were involved in different uses of the Ordeal. If a defendant was ordered to stay afloat for a certain distance, he had to do that in order to show the god confirmed the truth of his statement. Durand published the text (A.457) Bottero referred to in ARM XXVI, interpreting it so that the accused had to travel the given distance (corresponding to c. 40 metres) underwater.⁸⁹³ Heimpel, however, may be right in suggesting that the measure of 80 *a-ša* or “fields” (which Durand likened unto cubits)⁸⁹⁴ mentioned in the text may actually have more to do with the particular statement of the accused (the case was one of land ownership) than the Ordeal itself.⁸⁹⁵ The rest of the texts fail to mention any such measurements.

Heimpel doubted this procedure on the basis that the Mesopotamians

⁸⁹² Lambert 2013, 396. “Quite rapidly, attention is drawn to the judicial functions of this River”. Lambert goes on to discuss the difficulty of the text being addressed to one river when “Babylonia” was located between two rivers, but I find this irrelevant with regard to the tradition. Babylon is not mentioned in the text, and it was Euphrates (and later, Ḥabur) which was connected to a judicial function, a function that the Tigris never bore. For all we know, the invocation of “*at-ti ID*” at l. 1 may originally even have been addressed to the city of Id (“You, oh Id!”).

⁸⁹³ Durand 1988, 519.

⁸⁹⁴ Durand 1988, 519.

⁸⁹⁵ Heimpel 1996, 12.

might not have had an accurate method of measuring the distance of the accused from the shore, and he further pointed out the difficulty of determining whether one is afloat or not, with a drowning man sinking and emerging again and again in his struggle.⁸⁹⁶ One would imagine that the determining factor was simply whether one survived the plunge or not: survive, and one's claims were validated; perish, and they were not. The King of Justice text specifically states that the guilty party in the Ordeal would sink.⁸⁹⁷ Heimpel humorously asks whether the "ordalist" was rescued by an able lifeguard when he reached the given distance, and he suggests that anyone capable of swimming would have survived the Ordeal as Bottero described it. As discussed previously, the death of litigants did not seem to be the purpose of the Ordeal, but rather the confirmation of truth statements.

Heimpel also cast doubt on Durand's idea of traversing the distance underwater, referring to the instinct to come up for air when air is needed.⁸⁹⁸ But one has to wonder how common it was in ancient Mesopotamia for people to be able to swim, not to mention in a rushing river. Heimpel does admit that such an ordeal only makes sense among people who cannot swim, and he finds it difficult to believe that such a culture existed anywhere at any time –let alone along the Euphrates River, as shown by a document.⁸⁹⁹ While I have failed to locate any study discussing how widespread the ability to swim was among ancient Mesopotamians, or whether the Euphrates was a swimmable river, I doubt it can be taken for granted that all people living along bodies of water are able to swim.⁹⁰⁰ Indeed, it must be pointed out that according to the Mari letter, most ordalists did not even live in the vicinity of the river, which Heimpel recognizes.⁹⁰¹ Furthermore, the ability to swim may be lacking even in cultures inhabiting areas near bodies of water which are not suitable for swimming. One possible and simple explanation for the distance (*a-ša*) mentioned in the text A.457 would be that the accused had to make a 40-metre dive from a suitable spot

⁸⁹⁶ Heimpel 1996, 7.

⁸⁹⁷ Lambert 1965, 4, in which he states that the text "does finally settle the controversy as to which judgement sinking or floating implied".

⁸⁹⁸ Heimpel 1996, 7.

⁸⁹⁹ Heimpel 1996, 7.

⁹⁰⁰ There is iconographic evidence of at least assisted swimming among Assyrian military troops from the Neo-Assyrian period, but one can hardly interpolate from this that civilians who may have lived far from bodies of water suitable for swimming could have swum across a river (e.g. ANE 124538, a relief from the North-West palace of Aššurnasirpal II from Nimrud).

⁹⁰¹ Heimpel 1996, 8: "Single ordalists and plunging parties [...] came from Mari, Karkemish, Aleppo, the Habur triangle, and Elam".

along the river into the rushing stream, either to survive it or perish.⁹⁰² Although I am inclined to the proposition that the measurement concerned 40 cubic metres of land, whose ownership was resolved by the Ordeal in the case, one text is not enough to draw conclusions, but merely facilitates discussion.

Heimpel seemed to think that the god of the river ordeal was not ÍD at all, but rather Ea, “King of the Apsu”, the ruler of the subterranean waters, connected to the concept of springs and the river by the city of Hit.⁹⁰³ A weak connection of the river ordeal and Ugarit could be seen here; according to Lambert, El’s abode at the source of the rivers was “as close to the concept of the Apsu that the West Semites got”.⁹⁰⁴ Ea is indeed mentioned as the god of the Ordeal in *King of Justice III*, a literary text that may have been somewhat fashioned after Hammurapi’s code, functioning perhaps as a fictional commentary on it.⁹⁰⁵ There are three cases presented in the text, all of which all have a precedent in the Hammurapi code: corrupt judges and altering judgement correspond to §5, an ordeal to §2, and a case of false accusation parallels §3. The cases probably comment on the most interesting laws and were not randomly chosen; the concern of the text is the judicial process itself.

The Neo-Babylonian⁹⁰⁶ text was a story of a miracle meant to impress the fear of law, king, and god upon its audience.⁹⁰⁷ The text both contains narrative portions and references a code of laws,⁹⁰⁸ which may indeed have had precedents in actual legal codices. It must be born in mind that this text is several centuries younger than the Mari records, and thus it would have limited bearing on how the Ordeal was understood in the 18th century BCE. While in the *King of Justice* the cause of the Ordeal is the same as in Hammurapi’s code – that of sorcery – there are also some differences. In Hammurapi’s second law, both the accuser and the accused are sent to the Ordeal, while in the *King of Justice* only the accuser is put to the test.⁹⁰⁹ The text also specifies dawn as the time for the Ordeal, and that

⁹⁰² However, according to Herbert Niehr (personal communication), such cliffs do not exist along the shores of the Euphrates.

⁹⁰³ Heimpel 1996, 10.

⁹⁰⁴ Lambert 1985a, 538.

⁹⁰⁵ Lambert 1965, 3–4.

⁹⁰⁶ According to Lambert 1965, 2, the language of the text is the standard literary language of late Babylonia and Assyria.

⁹⁰⁷ Beaulieu 1992.

⁹⁰⁸ Lambert 1965, 1.

⁹⁰⁹ Note that in the Nuzi texts, both the plaintiff or accuser and the accused could be asked to undergo the Ordeal (not necessarily both at once), and the refusal of either party to undergo the Ordeal resolved the case for the benefit of the other party. Driver & Miles 1940, 134. On p.

people spoke with fear of the event, suggesting that it was not commonplace.⁹¹⁰

Yet, had the bitumen wells discussed by Heimpel been meant by the authors of the letters, one would expect to find specific terminology relating to them in the texts. Heimpel also does not account for the fact that many texts specifically refer to diving into or emerging from the *river*, not from a spring or a well, for which there were perfectly suitable words in Akkadian. Even if one considers *ÍD* a *terminus technicus* for the Ordeal,⁹¹¹ texts where the accused person's body is said to have come up from the river where his head had been hit (such as the King of Justice), or where it is hypothesized that the accused who could not be found may have crossed over to the other side of the river, do seem to refer to an actual river. It must be acknowledged that the King of Justice is not a primary witness to the Ordeal. But Heimpel does admit that the text can be used to level arguments against his proposal.⁹¹² There also exists a text from Mari (M.8142) where two men (a "boy of Alpan" and a "boy of Abi-Maṭar") have to drag a millstone across the river, which makes little sense in the context of bitumen wells; thus not all of the texts that could be used to argue against Heimpel are diachronic or literary texts. But there are also later texts that may provide insight into the connection between the OB Ordeal and the Combat Myth in light of his theory of bitumen wells as the location of the Ordeal.

The Geography of the Ordeal

With regard to Heimpel's suggestion, and tying the Ordeal again to the Combat Myth, Strabo's description of the area of coastal Syria near the location of ancient Ugarit (*Geography* 12.8.19) is relevant:

And in fact they make this the setting of the mythical story of the Arimi [Arameans] and of **the throes of Typhon**, calling it the Catacecaumenê country. Also, they do not hesitate to suspect that the parts of the country between the Maeander River and the Lydians are all of this nature, as well on account of the number of the lakes and rivers as on account of the numerous hollows in the earth. And **the lake between Laodiceia and Apameia**,

136, they come to the conclusion that "there seems to be no rule laying down which party shall be submitted to the Ordeal. This question must therefore have been left to the discretion of the judges, who will have settled it presumably on the merits of each particular case; either may be sent to it, either may be winner or loser". This is in line with what we know of the medieval European ordeals. Of course, the fact that we cannot discern the logic between whether the accused or the accuser engaged in the Ordeal does not mean that no logic existed.

⁹¹⁰ Lambert 1965, 3–4.

⁹¹¹ Frymer-Kensky 1977a, 377.

⁹¹² Heimpel 1996, 10.

although **like a sea, emits an effluvium** that is filthy and of subterranean origin. And they say that **lawsuits are brought against the god Maeander** for altering the boundaries of the countries on his banks, that is, when the projecting elbows of land are swept away by him; and that when he is convicted the fines are paid from the tolls collected at the ferries (emphasis added).

In Strabo's description of the customs of the area, it is the god of the river, Meander, who is litigated against. In light of the traditions discussed here, it is more likely that the story carries echoes of the practice of the Ordeal in the area. If Judge River was an epithet associated with the Orontes river (which Strabo calls Typhon), as I have discussed elsewhere, then perhaps Prince Sea is to be found in Strabo's lake, which the translator of the Loeb edition (H. L. Jones) interpreted in 1917 as referring to Chardak Ghieul, a place-name that I have been unable to match with anything in the modern Syrian area, but which might refer to the *Acıgöl* lake in Turkey, situated between the Turkish town of Çardak and the Phrygian Apamea. The difficulty comes from the existence of towns with the same name both in the modern Turkish and Syrian area, Strabo's frequent confusion over place-names, and the fact that such myths seemed to exist in multiple locations.

While the geography of the area has doubtless changed since the LBA, there are bodies of water between the locations of ancient Apamea-on-the-Orontes and the ancient city of Laodicea. Perhaps the lake near the village of modern Al-Qardahah would best fit Strabo's description, and could perhaps also be associated with Chardak Ghieul. But when compared with Arundell's itinerary,⁹¹³ it seems to be in Turkey that he leaves the village of Chardak on the road to Apamea, and comes across a lake with "saltish water" and rushes, which the locals called "Hagee Ghioul" and which he translated as the 'Bitter Lake': "Ce lac n'est autre que la Buḥaira Anṭākiya située dans la plaine d'el-'Amuq" (referring probably to *Amik Gölü*).⁹¹⁴ Perhaps there is even a connection with the name Ghioul/Ghieul and the Arabic word *ghūl*, the meaning of which is a demon or an evil spirit, fitting with the traditions discussed by Canaan (1922) and elaborated in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Note also that Malalas mentions the *lake* and *river* (the river probably being the Orontes) called Dragon (*draco*) near the city of Antigonía in his *Chronographia* 8.11. While it is the Mediterranean Sea that is meant by the Ugaritic *ym* most of the time, as with the other water courses with mythological

⁹¹³ Arundell 1828: 103–104. The itinerary reports his travels in the Turkish and Syrian areas in the early 19th century.

⁹¹⁴ Discussed also by Abel 1933, 152.

appellations it is important to note that Yamm most likely also referred to several locations *simultaneously*. There are two things which should be noted about these traditions: that the mythic constellations seem to have existed in multiple locations at the same time, and that there was a clear tendency to *localize* them, to tie the myths to local natural formations. But even if some local cultic functions had been associated with the geographic features in these areas originally, it is most likely the Aleppan ideology that would have been laid over the existing local traditions during the Amorite kingdom period.

Also interesting in this regard is Strabo's description of the Dead Sea (which he mistakenly calls Lake Sirbonis), the likeliest earth formation to which the myth could have been connected in the Palestinian area, as being

deep to the very shore, and has water so very heavy that there is no use for divers, and any person who walks into it and proceeds no farther than up to his navel is immediately **raised afloat**. It is **full of asphalt**. The asphalt is blown to the surface at irregular intervals from the midst of the deep, and with it rise bubbles, as though the water were **boiling**; and the surface of the lake, being convex, presents the appearance of **a hill**.

With the asphalt there arises also much soot, which, though **smoky**, is imperceptible to the eye; and it tarnishes copper and silver and anything that glistens, even gold; [...] because of the nature of the water, owing to which, as I was saying, there is no use for divers; and no person who walks into it can immerse himself either, but is raised afloat. [...] It is reasonable that this behaviour should occur in the middle of the lake, because the source of **the fire** and also the greater part of the asphalt is at the middle of it; but the bubbling up is irregular, because the movement of the fire, like that of many other subterranean **blasts**, follows no order known to us (*Geography* 16.2.42–43).

The physical description of the lake seems to contain the symbolic constellation of mountain, dragon, and the sea, in addition to filling the requirements for Heimpel's location of the River Ordeal. It does not take a lot of imagination to interpret the 'spirit' of the lake as the adversary of the local manifestation of the storm-god. While it would be reductionist to suggest that Prince Sea and Judge River (or indeed the other creatures mentioned in the list of foes vanquished by the goddess Anat) would simply or solely refer to these geographic features of the area – even though the river and the lake may have had cultic functions, if the local traditions recorded by Strabo are to be believed – this does not preclude an association between the geographic features and the mythological characters, which in fact seems to have persisted in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean up until modern times.

As already mentioned, Canaan (1922) collected local traditions on the haunted springs and water demons in the area of Palestine from the early 20th century, which in his view were originally rooted in the superstition and

mythology of the Semitic peoples specifically.⁹¹⁵ While the particulars of these traditions exhibit clear Islamic and Christian influence, it is possible that they contain traces of older local traditions. Canaan writes, “It is an old and wide-spread belief in all Semitic countries, that springs, cisterns and all running waters are inhabited”. Furthermore, he states: “I do not doubt that several or the springs and wells which are thought at present to be inhabited were believed in former times to be sacred, and were devoted to the cult of one of the numerous gods of Palestine. [...] Of course the name, the character, and the manner of appearance have changed, but the fundamental thought still exists. This is only one of the many survivals which point to the primitive religious practices of Palestine”.⁹¹⁶ While the Orientalist framework of the study is quite apparent, the witness of the local traditions that Canaan collected is still valuable. The evidence from Mari, both regarding the Ordeal and the Combat Myth, as well as the subsequent witnesses to the tradition discussed in this thesis, suggests that the mythology is far older than the early 20th century.

But Heimpel’s hypothesis, while certainly possible in light of these geographical studies – and through a bit of fantastic speculation – is not based on the evidence of the Mari letters, but on later accounts. Some of these witnesses are semi-mythological, such as the text called the “King of Justice” (BM 45690: III 21–IV 23). His proposition also seems unnecessarily complicated, compared to the scenario where the accused are urged *into the river*, which is the term used in all of the OB accounts. On the other hand, his hypothesis could well accord with the medieval ‘Ordeal of the Hot Water’ (*iudicium aquae fervantis*), in which the proband had to plunge his or her hand into scalding water, and it was only days later upon the examination of the healing of the resultant blisters that the outcome of the Ordeal was decided.⁹¹⁷ Strabo’s description of the Ordeal is, however, not the only reference to the concept between the OB texts and the medieval witnesses.

⁹¹⁵ While Canaan’s study explored Palestinian folk-lore, the idea itself is not new. Already in the 18th century the English poet William Blake wrote: “The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged and numerous senses could perceive. And particularly they studied the Genius of each city and country, placing it under its Mental Deity”. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 96–97 [c. 1790, Morgan Library and Museum electronic edition]. Blake’s ‘Mental Deity’ is what I would refer to as a totem, but what is noteworthy is the association between the totem, the water sources, and the mountains to the city and the nation.

⁹¹⁶ Canaan 1922, 3, 16–17.

⁹¹⁷ Leeson 2012, 694.

The Ordeal and Texts of the Hebrew Bible

We seem to find examples of this Amorite political terminology being used in much later texts – those of the HB. McCarter submitted that the Hebrew word אָד contained poetic allusions to the Ordeal,⁹¹⁸ following E. Dhorme's association of the Hebrew word אָד (or sometimes possibly written *plene* אִיד) with the Sumerian ÍD.⁹¹⁹ Albright had made the connection between the Akkadian *id(um)* and the Hebrew אָד already in 1939.⁹²⁰ Allusions to the River Ordeal have been suggested in the HB (e.g. in Gen 2:6, Job 36:27, Jon 2, and Pss. 18 (=2. Sam. 22), 66, 69, 88, 124, 144), all of which contain references to raging waters and accusers.⁹²¹ But why should we be able to find references to the River Ordeal in Biblical texts? It is my intention to discuss these passages in light of both the new evidence we have been able to glean from the Mari letters and recent studies on the functioning of the ordeals by water of medieval Europe, which are somewhat better understood due to their extensive documentation and the recentness of their history.

Prior to Dhorme's suggestion, the background of the Hebrew term אָד had been sought in the Akkadian word *edû(m)*, “an onrush of water” or “flood”, also a Sumerian loanword.⁹²² It does not seem altogether an unlikely cognate for the Hebrew word, especially due to the fact that Gen. 2:6 features several terms often used in connection with the Akkadian *edû(m)*. According to Speiser, the Biblical verse “might have been lifted verbatim from an Akkadian lexical work”.⁹²³ Speiser's argument is convincing, and McCarter, while presenting several Biblical passages where the river ordeal could plausibly be referenced, does not really counter it. He fails to show why ÍD – which probably took on the form *ittû(m)* in Akkadian, rather than *edû(m)* – should underlie these passages.⁹²⁴ The semantic

⁹¹⁸ McCarter 1973.

⁹¹⁹ Dhorme 1907, 274. He suggested that there was an Akkadian word *id(um)*, derived from the Sumerian ÍD.

⁹²⁰ Albright 1939, 102–103.

⁹²¹ McCarter 1973, 403–404.

⁹²² From A.DÉ.A (e.g. VAT 10270 iv 44).

⁹²³ See Speiser 1955, 9–11, who remarks that prior to this the traditional explanations for the term had ranged from spring and cloud to mist, which were all no more than guesses based on the context of the term.

⁹²⁴ McCarter was convinced that the Sumerian logogram ÍD found in the Akkadian texts pertaining to the River Ordeal would have been pronounced “id” rather than serving as a logogram for the

field of the word has been studied most recently by Tsumura, who does not see the Ordeal underlying these passages.⁹²⁵

But the Ordeal having formed the linguistic and especially the ideological background of the Hebrew term נא is a possibility that ought to be discredited outright. I have decided to examine the passages of Gen. 2:6, Dt. 32:33, Job 36:27, Jon. 2, and Pss. 18, 66, 69, 88, 124, 144 in this chapter, as we find not only possible echoes of the Combat Myth in them, but also the role of the king as a judiciary. It is in this role of the king as the judge for his people that we find a connection between Israelite kingship and other forms of ancient Semitic kingship; indeed, this role is one of the best attested shared aspects of these ancient kingships. Is. 33:22 is especially interesting in this regard, as Yahweh is proclaimed to be a judge, lawgiver, and king, taking on the traditional duties of the Mesopotamian king. This is preceded by a mention of rivers and streams in v. 21, which are indicated as belonging to Zion, and may allude to a temple.

The Book of Jonah is a prose narrative, but in Jon 2:3–5 we find a poetic fragment that may hold some relevance to the topic at hand:

וְתִשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִצּוֹלָה בְּלִבְבַּי יָמִים	And you cast me into the depths, <i>the heart of the seas</i>
וְנָהָר יִסְבְּבֵנִי כָל-מְשַׁבְּרָיו	and <i>the river</i> encompassed me, all your breakers
וְגִלְיָה עָלַי עָבְרוּ	And your billows crossed over me,
וְאָנִי אָמַרְתִּי נִגְרַשְׁתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ	And I myself said: I was cast off from your eyes
אֲךָ אוֹסִיף לְהִבִּיט אֶל-הֵיכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ	Yet I will look again at your palace sanctuary,
אֲפָפוּנִי מַיִם עַד-נֶפֶשׁ	The <i>waters</i> surrounded me up to the neck,
תְּהוֹם יִסְבְּבֵנִי	the <i>deep</i> encompassed me,
סוּף קָבֹשׁ לְרֹאשִׁי	a reed encircled my head.

Jon. 2 seems to contain a psalm, which may be older than the prose narrative, perhaps having been attached to it through motif attraction. In addition to the passage containing the ideas of the encompassing of the river, the passage also mentions the palace sanctuary, which may contain a weak allusion to the proposed temple at Id akin to Is. 33:22. The parallelism of sea and river should be noted in addition to the wealth of aquatic terminology. The vocabulary of the psalm in Jon. 2:3–10 is familiar from Ugaritic literature and from many of the psalms examined in this dissertation. What deserves special attention is Jonah's calling for help "from the belly of Sheol" (מִבֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל) in v. 2; in the Hebrew context Sheol has been associated with the god of Death, an enemy of Baal in the Baal Cycle. Verse 4 mentions 'the heart of the seas', which I discuss in section 6.4.2. But there

Akkadian word for river, nāru(m), on the basis of some syllabic spellings (possibly due to the influence of the CAD). McCarter also believed that the masculine Sumerian word could not refer to the feminine Akkadian word. McCarter 1973, 403.

⁹²⁵ Tsumura 2005.

seems to be nothing in particular in the passage to suggest the Ordeal.⁹²⁶

Dt. 32 is likewise considered one of the examples of archaic Hebrew poetry embedded in a younger prose narrative. Dt. 32:33–36a also features Yahweh as a judge:

חַמַּת תַּנִּינִים יֵינֵם וְרֹאשׁ פְּתָנִים אֶכְזֹר	The poison of <i>dragons</i> is their wine and the heads of <i>serpents</i> (is) cruel
הֲלֹא-הוּא כְּמֵס עִמָּדִי הֲתוּם בְּאוֹצְרֹתִי	Is this not stored up with me? Sealed among my storehouses,
לִי נֶקֶם וְשָׁלֹם לְעֵת תִּמְוֹט רַגְלִם	for the day of revenge and recompense? for the time when their feet will slip?
כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אִידֵם וְהֵשׁ עֲתִידָתָם לָמוֹ	Surely <i>the day of their Ordeal</i> draws near, and destiny rushes toward them.
כִּי-יִדְּיוּ יְהוָה עֲמוֹ וְעַל-עֲבָדָיו יִתֵּן חֶסֶד	For <i>judge</i> (is) Yahweh to his people, and to his servants he metes out justice.

The passage features the construct יוֹם אִידֵם, which McCarter suggested ought to be translated as “day of the ordeal”. This seems to be one of the strongest cases for understanding the word אִד as referring to the concept of the Ordeal. The existence of legal terminology in the vicinity of the phrase gives further weight to the interpretation. With regard to the idea of monstrous beings as rivers (discussed in section 5.1.3), the indication in the passage that the poison of the serpents is stored in the storehouses of the weather-god is rather curious, and it may even be suggested that the ‘head’ of v. 33 be translated as ‘headwaters’ akin to the text in the Babylonian *mappa mundi*. If the monstrous beings are understood as rivers, the allusion to the Ordeal is strengthened. The presence of monstrous beings and aquatic terminology in the context of judgement nonetheless form a mythic cluster that connects the passages to the tradition of the Combat Myth.

2. Sam. 22:5–6, 16–19 (which is found almost verbatim in Ps. 18:5–6, 16–19) has been linked both to the Ordeal by River and to the Combat Myth in the HB with the same term, ‘day of the Ordeal’.⁹²⁷ Ps. 18 and 2. Sam 22 seem to use a wealth of mythological vocabulary. Vv. 5–6 mention Death, Belial and Sheol, all of which represent negative forces. Sheol and Death are also mentioned together with other divinities in Canticles. While the phrase “the streams of Belial” (נְחָלֵי

⁹²⁶ Sheol and Death are paralleled twice in Is. 28:14–18, which Müller 2014 discussed in the context of the weapon (or Scourge) of Adad. The sea is not mentioned in the passage and therefore it falls outside the scope of the current study, but it is undeniably connected to the mythic pattern.

⁹²⁷ Müller (2008, 18–42) argued that vv. 4–20 formed a composition that was older than the framing text.

בְּלִיעַל) probably has little do with the Combat Myth, it may contain a witness to the conception of bodies of water as somehow demonic forces, discussed elsewhere in this dissertation.

כִּי אֶפְפְּנִי מִשְׁבְּרֵי־מָוֶת נַחֲמֵלִי בְּלִיעַל וּבַעֲתָנִי	For the <i>breakers</i> of Death surrounded me, the <i>torrents</i> of Belial assaulted me
חֲבִלֵי שְׁאוֹל סָבְבוּנִי קִדְמוֹנֵי מוֹקְשֵׁי מָוֶת	The cords of Sheol surrounded me, the snares of Death prevented me
וַיֵּרְאוּ אַפְקֵי הָאֵם וַיִּגְלוּ מַסְדּוֹת תְּהֹלֶל	And the <i>channels of the sea</i> ⁹²⁸ became visible, the foundations of dry land were laid bare
בְּמַעֲרַת יְהוָה מִנִּשְׁמַת רוּחַ אָפוּ:	From the rebuke of Yahweh ⁹²⁹ from the blast of the breath of his nostrils
יִשְׁלַח מִמְּרוֹם יְהוָה יִמְשְׁנֵנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים	He sent from the heights, he took me he drew me out from the <i>Great Waters</i>
יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבֵי עֹז מִשְׁנְאָאִי כִּי אֶמְצֹו מִמֶּנִּי	He delivered me from the strong enemies, from my haters, for they are stronger than I
יִקְדָּמֵנִי בַיּוֹם אֵיגְדִי וַיִּהְיֶה יְהוָה מִשְׁעֹנִי לִי	They confronted me on the <i>day of my Ordeal</i> , but Yahweh was supporting of me

The aquatic terminology in the passage is also connected to a theophany of the Storm-God. The passage features several keywords of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle – like ‘rebuke’, ‘heights’, ‘channels’, and ‘enemy’ – not to mention the actual name of one of the enemies of Baal, Death. Müller viewed the psalm in the context of the Storm-God’s battle against Mot. Verses 4–20 contain an epic fragment on the arrival of the combatant Storm-God, which was later changed into a hymn of thanksgiving.⁹³⁰

The Hebrew מָוֶת and the Ugaritic *mt* have been compared since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, and while the word שְׁאוֹל has no cognate in the Ugaritic texts, it has often been connected with the divinity Mot, or the abode thereof.⁹³¹ The verses contain mythological vocabulary, associated ideas of which can be found in the sphere of the Ugaritic texts. With regard to the idea of the Ordeal, vv. 16–19 hold more relevance. The rebuke of Yahweh is a phrase which upon occasion has been connected with the Biblical version of the Combat Myth, but combat does not seem to be the context of the phrase here. 2. Sam. 22/Ps. 18

⁹²⁸ Ps. 18 has ‘waters’.

⁹²⁹ Ps. 18 features the sg.2.m. person, “from your rebuke, O Yahweh”.

⁹³⁰ Müller 2008, 18–42. While Ps. 21 lacks all references to bodies of water, it contains a similar motif of Yahweh’s deliverance from the enemies; in this case, the subject if explicitly the king. In v. 8, the king is given assurance that the king’s *hand* (‘your hand’) will find his enemies: תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לְכַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וַיִּיגְדֵךְ תִּמְצָא שְׁנֵאֵיךָ.

⁹³¹ See Wyatt 1990b for discussion on the Biblical מָוֶת and the Ugaritic *mt*.

is one of the instances in the Biblical texts where the actual phrase יום-אִידִי (ostensibly to be translated as the ‘day of my Ordeal’) is used outside the Book of Job. Further support for an interpretation of the passage in relation to the Ordeal comes from the description of the physical context and conditions of the Ordeal, and the mention of the enemies (perhaps to be interpreted as the accusers) of the psalmist. While the dating of the psalm in particular is a much debated issue,⁹³² the fact that it contains vocabulary of the mythic constellation cannot be denied. The passage may be making use of the symbolism of the Ordeal.

Ps. 69:2–3, 15–16 likewise contain imagery of drowning and accusations. However, legal terminology and the technical terms for the Ordeal are absent from the passage, making it impossible to conclude that a connection between the psalm and the Ordeal exists.

הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים	Save me, god!
כִּי בָאוּ מַיִם עַד-נֶפֶשׁ	For <i>the waters</i> have come up to (my) neck
טָבַעְתִּי בִּיּוֹן מְצוּלָה	I have sunk in a <i>deep mire</i>
וְאֵין מַעֲמִיד	and there is no standing
בָּאתִי בַּמַּעַמְקֵי-מַיִם	I have come to the streams/ <i>depths of the waters</i>
וְשִׁבְלֹת שֶׁטַףְתָּנִי	and a flood has swept over me
הַצִּילֵנִי מִטִּיט	Deliver me from the mire!
וְאַל-אֶטְבָּעָה	And do not let me sink,
אֶצְלָה מִשֹּׂנְאָי	deliver me from my haters
וּמִמַּעַמְקֵי מַיִם	and from the streams/ <i>depths of the waters</i>
אַל-תִּשְׁטַפְנִי שִׁבְלֹת מַיִם	do not let <i>the flood of water</i> sweep over me,
וְאַל-תִּבְלַעֵנִי מְצוּלָה	and do not let <i>the depths</i> swallow me
וְאַל-תִּסְמָךְ-עָלַי בָּאֵר פִּיהָ	and do not let the pit close its mouth over me

It is possible to read the psalm in the context of the king’s cultic suffering, but other readings may also be entertained. The use of “legal” terminology has been noted in Ps. 69:5 especially, where roots such as חָנַם and שָׁקַר have an established legal dimension, and in which the legal question of guilt or innocence is linked with the onrush of the “cosmic waters”.⁹³³ According to McCarter, it is “difficult not to relate these accounts of water judgement to the Mesopotamian type of River Ordeal in its legal and cosmological contexts”,⁹³⁴ the latter of which remain extremely obscure even in the Mesopotamian texts. Note that the psalm shares with the passage from Jonah the idea of the waters coming up to the נֶפֶשׁ of the psalmist; if the word is understood in its most basic physical sense as the breathing apparatus, this could indicate drowning. The combination of the

⁹³² Brenner 1991, 102.

⁹³³ McCarter 1973, 405–406.

⁹³⁴ McCarter 1973, 407.

terminus technicus for the Ordeal and the legal vocabulary opens the possibility of the idea of water judgement in the background of the text.

Ps. 88:17–18 contains what seem like very vague references to the Ordeal:

עָלֵי עֲבָרוֹי חָרוּקָה	Your wrath had <i>crossed</i> over me,
בְּעוֹתִיק צָמְתוּחֵנִי	your terrors had cut me off,
סָבְבוּ כַּמִּים כָּל-הַיּוֹם	they surrounded me <i>like waters all that day</i>
הִקִּיפוּ עָלַי יָחַד	they went around over me together.

Noteworthy here is the use of the verb ‘to cross over’ (עָבַר) to describe the action of the wrath of the divinity. I will discuss the verb in more detail in connection with the Exodus-traditions in section 6.4.2. The imagery of drowning is certainly present in the psalm, but one would require some legal terminology in order to be able to associate the waters with judgement. A cognate verb is used of the Ordeal in Akkadian texts, but in a different context. In the psalm, the waters come up to the psalmist, while in Elamite texts, the ordalist “comes up from the waters” (*ina mē illima*) or the waters are “caused to go up” (*mē ušellima*). According to Frymer-Kensky, in texts from Susa the latter was considered the favourable result of the drinking ordeal and the former was considered negative or neutral.⁹³⁵ It is possible that the Ordeal formed the symbolic background of the passage, but there does not seem to be enough to suggest a stronger connection.

Ps. 124:3–5⁹³⁶ is short, and as such it is a possible candidate for one of the older psalms:

אֲזִי חַיִּים בָּלְעֵנוּ	Then the <i>living waters</i> had swallowed us
בְּחֵרוֹת אַפָּם בָּנוּ	in the heat of their anger toward us,
אֲזִי הַמַּיִם שָׁטְפוּנוּ	Then <i>the waters</i> had flowed over us,
בְּחֵלָה עָבַר עַל-נַפְשֵׁנוּ	<i>the stream</i> had have crossed over our necks,
אֲזִי עָבַר עַל-נַפְשֵׁנוּ	Then had crossed over our necks
הַמַּיִם הַגִּדּוֹנִים	the <i>proud waters</i> .

Like Ps. 88, it contains the verb for crossing (עָבַר), and it also features uprising of the waters to the נָפֶשׁ. The living waters and the heat of anger may also allude to the same concept of passing through water and fire that I will discuss later in connection with the Canticles. Seybold interpreted the psalm as a metaphor for escaping death,⁹³⁷ which would fit well with the motif of the Ordeal or the use of ordeal vocabulary.

According to Prinsloo, Ps. 124 is one of two psalms that compare the estrangement from Yahweh to being engulfed by water, and it is the only psalm where the motifs of creation and water occur in tandem (the other being Ps. 130).

⁹³⁵ Frymer-Kensky 1981, 118.

⁹³⁶ See Seybold 1996; Terrien 2003.

⁹³⁷ Seybold 1996, 483.

He interpreted this “anti-creation” (which he described as a “return to the state of chaos”) motif as evidence of the historical reality of the Post-Exilic community.⁹³⁸ Prinsloo interpreted the psalm as an inversion of Ex. 15 and the motif of the Reed Sea. In the psalm Israel is engulfed by water just as the Pharaoh’s armies were at the Reed Sea.⁹³⁹ While I would not interpret the psalm as a return to chaos like he does, his proposition of the psalm as representing anti-creation may have merit in the context discussed in section 6.4.2., regarding the use of subversion in the Exodus-narrative with the ideological programme of the creation of the new national myth during the Exile.

In light of the passages collected in this chapter, the first part is manifestly untrue. Furthermore, there is little need to interpret the verses in the context of creation, even if they were attached to a creation motif secondarily. Prinsloo also interpreted Ps. 124 in the context of both Tiamat’s battle with Marduk and Baal’s battle with Yamm (“the life-threatening force that is, however, subdued by Yamm”), offering KTU 1.2 IV 23–27 as a parallel to it, where the clubs leap out of Baal’s hands to defeat Yamm, and presenting much of the “same imagery” as in Ps. 124.⁹⁴⁰ One imagines that the closeness of this imagery owes mostly to the mention of the bird (בְּצִפּוֹרִי) escaping the snare in Ps. 124:7 and the leaping of the *šmd*-weapon like a bird of prey (*km nšr*) in the text of the Baal Cycle. In fact, the two passages do not actually share vocabulary, idiom, motif, or idea, merely a vaguely similar use of syntactic construction. Prinsloo understood the bird references as metaphors for death.⁹⁴¹ In the Baal Cycle, the bird metaphor seems to indicate the fierceness of the weapons, not death itself.

These sorts of general ‘parallels’ advocated for the texts do not necessarily advance our understanding of them. Neither would I regard KTU 1.2 IV as a particularly close parallel to Ps. 124, in spite of both containing a negative portrayal of something named after a liquid. While the psalm contains a negative portrayal of water and an adversarial atmosphere, there is nothing in particular to connect it with the Combat Myth or the Ugaritic texts. Its interpretation in light of the Ordeal hinges on the interpretation of בְּצִפּוֹרִי as representing legal terminology, while it may again simply refer to the breathing apparatus. The psalm may, however, be the only text in the HB to contain an allusion to Judge River in v. 4

⁹³⁸ Prinsloo 2007, 181, 201.

⁹³⁹ Prinsloo 2007, 202.

⁹⁴⁰ Prinsloo 2007, 198–199.

⁹⁴¹ Prinsloo 2007, 200.

(הַמַּיִם שֶׁטְפוּנוּ בַּחֲלָה)⁹⁴², although the word ‘river’ is not mentioned in the psalm, and therefore the verse can function only as an allusion to the epithet.

Ps. 144:6–8,⁹⁴³ which has been connected with water judgement and contains lexical items pertaining to the Combat Myth, makes mention of the “Great Waters”:

בְּרוּק בָּרַק וְתַפִּיצֵם	Strike down <i>lightning</i> and scatter them,
שְׁלַח חֲצִידֶךָ וְתַהַפֵּם	send your <i>arrows</i> and destroy them,
שְׁלַח יָדְךָ מִמְּרוֹם	send your <i>hand(s)</i> from the <i>heights</i> ,
פָּצַנִי וְהַצִּילֵנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים	rescue me and deliver me from the <i>Great Waters</i> ,
מִיַּד בְּנֵי נָכָר	from the <i>hand</i> of the sons of strangers,
אֲשֶׁר פִּיהֶם דִּבְרֵי-שָׁוְא	whose mouths speak falsehood,
וְיָמִינָם יְמִין שֶׁקֶר	and (whose) right hand is the right hand of lying.

The psalm makes no mention of the sea, but features a theophany of the Storm-God, and parallels his lighting with arrows and the ‘hand’ of god, alluding to the concept of the divine weapon discussed in the previous chapter. The theophany of the Storm-God was first discussed by Jeremias 1965, who came up with the “*Theophanie Gattung*”. However, the connection of the theophany of the Storm-God with the Combat Myth has been questioned, as the Ugaritic texts do not seem to feature an explicit theophany of Baal in the texts.⁹⁴⁴ That said, *EE* (IV 39–40, 57–58) may be interpreted as containing a theophany of the Storm-God, as Marduk places lightning before him, fills himself with burning flame, wraps a mantle of *pulhu* around himself and covers his head with *melammu*. This may be compared with Ps. 104:2, where Yahweh clothes himself with honour and majesty and wraps light around him as a garment. The ‘heights’ mentioned in the psalm are paralleled in the text of the Baal Cycle, in connection with Baal.

The “Great Waters” or “many waters” (מַיִם רַבִּים)⁹⁴⁵ of Ps. 144 is a complicated mythological term. A connection to the Ordeal has been proposed in relation to the deliverance from the waters in the psalm. One wonders whether the ‘Great Waters’ at least occasionally functioned simply as a technical term for the Mediterranean Sea, an analogue to the Egyptian *wzd-wr* (‘Great Green’) and the Mesopotamian A.AB.BA *ra-bi-tim* (‘Great Sea’). This would definitely explain the frequency with which this term is found in connection with the Combat Myth

⁹⁴² Perhaps attempts could even be made to parse the verse “Then the sea / our judge: the river / had gone over our soul”.

⁹⁴³ See Weiser 1962, 823; Dahood 1970, 328–332; Kraus 1993, 540–541; Broyles 1999, 501–502; Saur 2004, 250–264 for discussion and bibliography. Research history can be found in Holtz 2008, 270ff.

⁹⁴⁴ Note, however, that a few have been suggested (e.g. KTU 1.101).

⁹⁴⁵ Or in light of the *nhr il rbm* of the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.3 III 39), a translation of “Great Waters” may be warranted, alluding perhaps to a personalized body of water like the ones defeated in the list connected to the goddess Anat.

in the texts of the HB. In Hebrew, the usual designation for the Mediterranean was הַיָּם הַיָּבֵשׁ.

Holtz connected the psalm with Mesopotamian royal ideology, albeit he interpreted the psalm as a prayer in the face of battle rather than used in the judicial sphere.⁹⁴⁶ The psalm has been considered a royal psalm, connected to the Davidic monarch, and Holtz proposed that it presents the king as a “capable warrior” on the one hand and as a “provider of prosperity” on the other.⁹⁴⁷ The role of a righteous judge could be added to these, as that features in the responsibilities of the king in both Ugaritic texts and Mesopotamian inscriptions. Holtz interpreted the first part of the psalm (consisting of v. 1–11) as representing this warrior nature of the king. I would interpret vv. 5–7a as a theophany of the Storm-God, followed by a plea in vv. 7b–11 that starts and ends with a reference to the right hand of lying. It is in these verses that judicial terminology can be observed.⁹⁴⁸

While Holtz made many valuable observations, the problem with his examination of the psalm arises from the fact that he compared it, in his own words, to “Akkadian expressions of Mesopotamian royal ideology”⁹⁴⁹ (and then proceeds to compare it mainly to the Code of Hammurapi – Hammurapi being, importantly, an *Amorite* ruler whose expressions of royal ideology show many innovations and irregularities in comparison to “standard expressions of Mesopotamian royal ideology” due to the political climate of the OB period – and furthermore to the Assyrian Aššurbanipal),⁹⁵⁰ when the OB examples are

⁹⁴⁶ Holtz 2008.

⁹⁴⁷ Holtz 2008, 369–370; Weiser 1962, 823–824; Kraus 1993, 541; Saur 2004, 249–268.

⁹⁴⁸ Note also that verses 1–11 have been thought to be as older than the subsequent verses. Holtz 2008, 371.

⁹⁴⁹ Holtz 2008, 373.

⁹⁵⁰ Note, however, that although Wyatt (2001, 117) claims that Hammurapi made claims of world domination and “ruling from sea to sea” (which Wyatt argued on the basis of the expression “four quarters of the earth” found in the Prologue (iv 70:1–20), where the word *kibru* signifies the “bank of a river, or the shore of the sea”, representing the furthest limits of the world encircled by the Apsu). ‘Ruler of the four quarters of the world’ was a standard epithet for a Mesopotamian king, but I think it is significant that out of the many rulers of the OB period, Hammurapi, who was both unable to defeat Yamhad and unwilling to accept it as suzerain, notably *never* claimed to have conquered the areas from the Upper sea to the Lower sea.

There actually seems to be a curious absence in this regard in Hammurapi’s royal propaganda. The phrase is nowhere found in connection with his name, and indeed most of his inscriptions (E4.3.6.x) concentrate on building works and maintaining the stability of the land. I would argue that the reason for his inability to make this claim was due to the fact that he never received the patronage of or an alliance with Yamhad, which effectively blocked his way to the coast. The Yamhadian kingdom of Hammurapi’s day was far greater than the Babylonian monarch’s empire, which is why Yahdun-Lim of Mari could, with its patronage, make claims that Hammurapi could not. The monarchs who could and did make claims to having conquered

extremely removed from the Biblical text, temporally speaking, and most likely did not serve as their *direct* frame of reference. There exist expressions which are both culturally and temporally more relevant, which can be examined in connection with the royal ideology of the psalm. In the case of indirect influence, intermediary points of cultural contact must be established, as I have attempted to do in this work.

In fact, Holtz described ancient Israel and Mesopotamia as “two civilizations”, which would scarcely be a fair description of the multiplicity of traditions native to both areas, even if the evidence examined by him did not span two millennia. Neither can I agree with him in the assessment that the psalm would have been “originally composed as an Israelite parallel to Mesopotamian royal ideology”.⁹⁵¹ While Israelite royal ideology was doubtless influenced by the neighbours of the kingdom great and small, a royal ideology (or ideologies) of its own surely existed in the area, naturally and organically, as long and as soon as there was a king. Although such may be impossible for the entirety of ANE royal ideology, individual expressions may be more easily examined and their development observed. While I do agree with Holtz that this psalm – and many others – contain aspects of Mesopotamian royal ideology (and still others NWS royal ideology specifically), I think that much more specific examples can be submitted. The Ordeal by River provides an example which is specific enough to allow such examination. However, there are no linguistic parallels between the verses of 7b–11 and ancient Mesopotamian references to the judicial ordeal, and therefore whatever allusion the psalm may contain *vis-à-vis* this practice must remain on the level of adopted ideas and themes only.⁹⁵²

Certainly, there are conceptual arguments for understanding many of the passages discussed in this chapter in light of the Ordeal. But the most convincing case made by McCarter for the connection of the Hebrew term אֶד and the River Ordeal is in the Book of Job, especially with the construction לְיוֹם אֶד, already featured in a few psalms, which can be interpreted as having the technical meaning “on the day of the River Ordeal” (cf. Job 21:17, 30, 36:27–28).⁹⁵³

both the seas are few and far between, and for all his pretensions, Hammurapi of Babylon was not one of them.

⁹⁵¹ Holtz 2008, 379.

⁹⁵² Kraus (1993, 127) writes that the court of the king of Jerusalem participated “in the ideas and representations of ANE royal ideology”. But in addition to this, it also served as an example of the same.

⁹⁵³ McCarter 1973, 408–409. Note also that according to Nömmik 2014, 280, the word אֶד “his

כַּמֶּה נֶר-רָשָׁעִים יִדְעָה
וְיָבֹא עֲלֵימוֹ אִיְדָם
חֲבָלִים יַחֲלֹק בְּאַפּוֹ

How often is the property of the wicked confiscated
Or does their *ordeal* go over them?
That he should distribute pains at his anger

כִּי לְיוֹם אִידִי נִחְשָׁה רָע
לְיוֹם עֲבָרוֹת יוֹבְלוֹ

For on the *day of the Ordeal* the wicked is spared,
on the *day of its overflow* they are lead along

כִּי יִגְרַע נֹטְפֵי-מַיִם
יִזְקוּ מִטֶּר לְאָדָם
אֲשֶׁר-יִזְלוּ שָׁמַיִם
יִרְצְפוּ עָלֵי אָדָם רָב

For he draws away the drops of *the waters*
they are refined as rain *for his Ordeal*,
which the skies pour down,
(and) drop on the leaders of men.

McCarter claimed that only in Job does the term refer to an actual legal procedure – while denying the existence of the actual legal institution in ancient Israel – rather than to a general mythological backdrop. But he also added: “Whether Israel had any historical memory of an actual legal institution of river ordeal, or to what extent the procedures of the Ordeal were practised anywhere in Canaan remains a matter of speculation”. There is no evidence that Ordeal by River was ever practised in the area of Palestine.⁹⁵⁴

Babylonian material may well have influenced the Joban author(s), the earliest of whom were probably writing no earlier than the late Persian period.⁹⁵⁵ But would the author have referenced actual legal procedure, the last mentions of which are from the 14th century BCE? Furthermore, the vocabulary used in the passages has a closer affinity with the older OB form of the Ordeal than to the more recent Middle Assyrian traditions, references to which seem all the more unlikely. It would appear that the more natural source for the language is to be found in an antiquated but curious practice surviving mostly in legend. Likewise, the Ordeal is not the actual topic of the text, but the imagery is used to invoke the concept of injustice.

In Num. 5:11–31, on the other hand, we have what seems to be a clear instance of trial by ordeal in the HB, although it does not reference the river. On the surface, the passage would appear to describe a trial by drinking, which was connected to the crime of adultery. In this ‘Ordeal of Bitter Water’, the ordalist was made to drink a poisoned liquid, which would either kill her or leave her

light” may be emended to יִזְרֹא, where it would parallel the sea. The emended text would read “Behold, he spread on top of the stream and covers up the roots of the sea”.

⁹⁵⁴ McCarter 1973, 412.

⁹⁵⁵ Nömmik 2014 discussed the redaction history of the book. On the topic of dating, see p. 283 and references. According to Joosten 2013b, 357, it is only the very beginning of Job that can be dated to the Persian period, with the rest of the text containing features of earlier language forms from the Babylonian period.

unscathed.⁹⁵⁶ A similar type of ordeal has been practised in certain African societies (e.g. Liberia and Nigeria) until recent times, and studies have been made on its function.⁹⁵⁷ Apparently an innocent ordalist, convinced of his or her guiltlessness, will consume the poison more readily and quickly, increasing the likelihood of survival. The ordeal then works as a rather brutal lie detector – one that is not kind to the innocent sceptic.⁹⁵⁸

El-Barghuti described a similar ordeal among the Bedouin of Palestine in the early 20th century. Called ‘the swallowing’, the Ordeal consisted of swallowing “quickly and without hesitation either something hard, like dry bread, or something nauseating and disagreeable, like medicine”. The guilty party is the one that

hesitates, complains, or vomits [...]. Those who perform the act quickly and with nonchalance are declared innocent, even though they may be the real offenders. The sheikh frightens the accused by repeating some magic words and prayers over the articles to be swallowed, pretending that they thus attain a special potency, which has a different effect upon the guilty and the innocent.⁹⁵⁹

Perhaps a similar inner working could have affected the outcome of the Ordeal by River, but the practice is so poorly understood that such musings are mere idle speculation. The language of the Num. passage clearly borrows from Mesopotamian legal tradition, which does not necessitate a borrowing from any single source. It is likely that the entire legal tradition of the time of the writing of Num. owed much to Babylonian law. There are also a few HB texts historically connected to the Ordeal tradition that may contain allusions to Amorite political conceptions – but not to Ordeal by River.

Passing Through Water and Fire in the Hebrew Bible

While Ps. 66:6, 9–12 has been connected with the Ordeal, it seems to belong to the Exodus tradition, and therefore it owes influence to the hybrid Babylonian

⁹⁵⁶ Bartlett 1986, 82, 84. Frymer-Kensky 1981, 118, also mentions a trial of “taking the waters” from Susa, mentioned in four texts, which she thinks cannot be a form of Ordeal by River, as “you cannot throw someone in a river and not know whether he has floated or sunk”. She viewed the Susa texts, which incidentally contain the phrase “waters coming up”, as representing drinking trials. According to her, however, the trial by drinking is misunderstood, and it is actually a “classic solemn oath” rather than an ordeal.

⁹⁵⁷ Tonkin 2000; Adewoye 1977. Adewoye mentions (p.8) that in cases of witchcraft, the accused person was made to swim across a creek full of crocodiles and determined innocent if he surfaced alive.

⁹⁵⁸ Leeson 2012, 699ff. According to Leeson, these forms of the Ordeal would not have been used on known non-believers and (and e.g. Jews in Europe were exempt from them).

⁹⁵⁹ El-Barghuti 1922, 22.

myth, especially with regard to walking through the masses of water. Although I discuss the psalm in connection with the Ordeal, and suspect that the tradition of the Combat Myth does underlie the use of the vocabulary in it, I do not think that it contains any connection to the OB ordeal.

הִפֵּךְ יָם לִיבֹשָׁה בְּנָהָר יַעֲבִירוּ בְּרַגְלָם שָׁם נִשְׂמְחָה-בּוֹ	He had turned <i>the sea</i> into dry land <i>through the river</i> they crossed on foot there do we rejoice in him!
הַשֵּׁם נִפְשָׁנוּ בְּחַיִּים וְלֹא-נָתַן לַמּוֹט רַגְלֵנוּ	He, who sets our breath to life, and did not give our feet to movement
כִּי-בִחַנְתֵּנוּ אֱלֹהִים צָרָתֵנוּ כַּצָּר-רָקֶסֶר	For you have tested us, God, you have tried us like tried silver
הִבֵּאתֵנוּ בַּמִּצּוֹדָה שָׁמָּה מוֹשְׁקָה בְּמַתְּנֵינוּ הִרְפַּכְתָּ אֲנֹשׁ לְרֹאשׁוֹ	You brought us into the net you set binds to our loins you made men ride over our heads
בְּאֵשׁ-וּבַמַּיִם וַתּוֹצִיאֵנוּ לְרֹחֶק	We went <i>through fire</i> and <i>through water</i> and you brought us to abundance!

Ps. 66 contains the parallelism of sea and river akin to Ps. 46, and may allude to the Combat Myth, in the case of Ps. 66 it is possibly to the hybrid Babylonian myth.⁹⁶⁰ According to Cross, the parallelism of sea and river in the psalm reveals their cultic meaning, the roots of which are in “Canaanite” mythology.⁹⁶¹ But Ps. 66 is more likely referencing the Exodus tradition, in which the sea is split in two, a motif which is later repeated by the Jordan River.⁹⁶²

According to Kloos both motifs – the crossing of the Jordan and the crossing of the Reed Sea – owe influence to the NWS Combat Myth. She also submitted that the tradition of the crossing of the Jordan would, in addition to NWS poetic tradition, also owe influence to the Reed Sea motif.⁹⁶³ This may find support from the fact that, especially in the version found in Jos. 3:14–17, the narrative of the crossing of the Jordan has many more references to natural

⁹⁶⁰ Further indication of the connection of the psalm to the hybrid tradition is found in the Sumerian poem describing Enki (translated by Kramer 1944, 63): “When Enki rises, the fish... rise / The abyss stands in wonder / In the sea joy enters / Fear comes over the deep / Terror holds the exalted river / The Euphrates, the South Wind lifts it in waves”.

⁹⁶¹ Cross 1973, 112–144.

⁹⁶² Pakkala 2014, 302, for example, discussed the splitting of the Jordan performed by the prophets Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kgs 2–3, which they perform by hitting the water with their אֲדָרֶת, usually translated as ‘mantle’, and which has a semantic relationship with אָדָר, ‘majesty’. The mythologies surrounding the Jordan have been studied recently by Havrelock 2011.

⁹⁶³ Kloos 1986, 205. Widengren 1958, 173, however, saw the tradition of the battle against a river as separate from the battle against the sea, both in Ugaritic and Hebrew mythology, although he admitted that they later became conflated.

phenomena and actual geographic locations.⁹⁶⁴ Maclaurin made a connection between Yahweh's dominance over the Jordan and the Reed Sea, and how the sea and the river were manifestations of Yamm's power in Ugarit already in the 1960s.⁹⁶⁵ Rivers have been proposed to have functioned as Yamm's weapons, probably analogous to Neo-Assyrian inscriptions that describe "the Flood" as the weapon of Adad (e.g. A.O.102.2:46).

The Babylonian Theodicy (SACT 9),⁹⁶⁶ a text connected with the Biblical Book of Job, among other possible references to the Combat Myth, also features the parallelism of sea and river in BT III 23–24:

<i>ku-up-pu ib-ri lib-ba-ka šá la i-qát-tu-ú na-qab-[šú]</i>	My friend, your heart is a river [whose] spring never fails;
<i>ku-mur-re-e gi-piš tam-tim šá la i-šu-ú mi-ṭi-[ta]</i>	the accumulated mass of the sea, which does not decrea[se].

The same parallelism is featured in the Biblical Job 14:11: "As water evaporates from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dried up". The drying up of the sea or the river is mentioned in several Biblical texts,⁹⁶⁷ although most of the references seem to belong to the Exodus traditions. Despite featuring the same parallelism, the contexts of the Job and BT passages are different. The Joban verse could be argued to hold some vague connection to the Combat Myth inasmuch as the drying up of the sea is understood as a depersonification of the motif or a metaphorical recollection of the adversarial relationship between the god and the sea, but the motif is hardly explicit. The passage of the Theodicy, on the other hand, has no connection to the battle motif whatsoever. The connection of these texts to kingship is also a complex question. The text may have been intended as didactic literature for the king, as education for ideal kingship, which would

⁹⁶⁴ Segert 1994, 198.

⁹⁶⁵ Maclaurin 1962, 449.

⁹⁶⁶ See Oshima 2013.

⁹⁶⁷ Josh. 2:10: "For we have heard how Yahweh *dried up the water of the Red Sea* before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed"; 4:23: "For Yahweh your God *dried up the waters of the Jordan* before you until you had crossed, just as Yahweh your God *had done to the Red Sea, which he dried up* before us until we had crossed"; Ps. 66:6: "He turned *the sea into dry land*; they passed through the river on foot; there let us rejoice in him!"; 106:9: "Thus *he rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up*; and he led them through the deeps, as through the wilderness"; Jer. 51:36: "Therefore thus says Yahweh, "Behold, I am going to plead your case and exact full vengeance for you; *and I shall dry up her sea* and make her fountain dry"; Is. 19:5: "And the waters from *the sea will dry up*, and the river will be parched and dry"; 44:27: "It is I who says to *the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!*' And I will make your rivers dry"; 50:2: "Why was there no man when I came? When I called, why was there none to answer? Is my hand so short that it cannot ransom? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, *I dry up the sea with my rebuke*, I make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst"; 51:10: "Was it not *you who dried up the sea*, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over?"

warrant weaving of the foundational myth of kingship into the narratives. But demonstrating such motivations for the use of this terminology in the texts is quite difficult.

Edelman discussed the flood as an agent of overturning order and as a divine agent in war.⁹⁶⁸ Old Babylonian even has a word for the flood-weapon, ^{ges}*a-ma-ru* (from the Sumerian for “wood of the flood”). However, there is nothing in the Ugaritic texts beyond the name of the divinity to suggest that the sea and rivers were manifestations of Yamm’s power, or even that they were his divine domain, the association of which rests on a simple corollary between name and element. While the Jordan tradition may have been influenced by the Exodus-narrative,⁹⁶⁹ it would appear that both traditions have also been influenced principally by the Babylonian Combat Myth, and they may contain direct – or more likely indirect – influence of the NWS Combat Myth (or local iterations of the same) in addition to this, as the Babylonian myth also contains influence from the NWS or Amorite myth. It must also be noted that the concept of the crossing of a river is more easily seen in the context of a real-world political act in the form of a military campaign Josh. 4:21–24 may also contain mythological traces of Yahweh’s power over the Jordan and the Sea.⁹⁷⁰

Loewenstamm argued against a mythological understanding of the word-pair in this particular instance, although he does think that the traditions of the crossing of the Jordan and the Reed Sea developed from the myth of the battle fought against Yamm and Nahar.⁹⁷¹ While the Combat Myth may be alluded to by the use of the word-pair, I agree with Loewenstamm that there is no reason to assume that the word-pair could not be used without explicit reference to this mythology. However, Ps. 66 offers an example of the actualization of myths. Verses 5–7 reiterate the Exodus event, and it has been suggested that in performance of the psalm, the “us” of the verse refers both to the ancestors of mythic times of days gone by and to the community in the present day.⁹⁷² Nissinen mentioned the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan as “foundational events in biblical history, marking the transition from one status to another”.⁹⁷³ I

⁹⁶⁸ Edelman 2014, 85–86.

⁹⁶⁹ The parallelism of sea and river were connected to the Exodus tradition and the Reed sea also by Stoltz 1999, 740. See also Vidal 2004, 150.

⁹⁷⁰ Dahood 1970, 133–135.

⁹⁷¹ Loewenstamm 1965, 96–101.

⁹⁷² Lelièvre 1976, 253–275; Terrien 2003, 478–479.

⁹⁷³ Nissinen 2014, 42.

will return to this concept in connection with the Reed Sea traditions, discussed in section 6.4.1.

The psalm may also contain an allusion to the cultic ritual of the royal adoption scene discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, a feature of which may have been the king's passing through fire and water as a cultic act. This is an example of the transformation of tradition, in which the old monarchic tradition was transposed onto the people of Israel, who had to enact the role formerly performed by the king. Ps. 66:6 also features the parallelism between sea and river. Of course, there is a chance that the turning of a body of water into dry land for the Psalmist to walk through to safety may have inherited traditions of the Ordeal, but the problem is that we do not have any such texts from the Mesopotamian area, poetic or otherwise, that indicate this. Most likely, the crossing of the river in the psalm is actually a subversion or variant tradition of the sea of the Combat Myth; in spite of a few vaguely legal terms there does not seem to be enough to connect the passage to the Ordeal.

Next I will discuss references to the Combat Myth in Canticles and speculate on the reasons it may have been embedded in the poem. While I do not think that the passage of Canticles 8:5–7 is a reference to the Ordeal by River, based on the shared imagery and vocabulary I would argue that many of the passages which have been connected to the Mesopotamian ordeal historically (which I have discussed here) actually find a closer correspondence to the NWS traditions, being embedded in an archaic or archaicizing poetic fragment in Canticles. Canticles, which has often been seen as a type example of Hebrew cultic poetry, has most often been connected with Babylonian parallels, especially in the hymns of Ishtar and Tammuz or Nabu and Tashmetu. These cultic hymns, often regarded as 'love poetry', may share affinities with the Babylonian tradition. However, there has been a tendency in recent years to discredit the possible Babylonian influence on Canticles, dating it to the Persian period.⁹⁷⁴ This is most likely correct regarding the final form of the book, but as I will demonstrate next, there is reason to suggest that at least some verses do hark back to a Bronze Age NWS poetic tradition, or at the very least owe influence to it.

The text connected with the Ordeal by River that is of most interest with

⁹⁷⁴ Barbiero 2011, 31. The reason for the dating is the presence of a few Persian loan words in the text. This, of course, is not proof that all parts of the text are necessarily from the Persian period, only that the latest redaction is. The psalm of Cant. 8 shows signs of older traditions.

regard to the topic of this dissertation is Cant. 8:5–7:

מי זאת עלה מן-המדבר מתרפקת על-דודך תחת התפוח עוררתיך שמה חבלתך אמך שמה חבלה ילדתך	Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her <i>Beloved</i> ? Under the apple tree I <i>awakened</i> you, there your mother was in travail with you; there was she in travail and brought you forth.
שימני כחותם על-לבך כחותם על-זרועך כי-עזה כמות אהבה קשה כשאויל קנאה	<i>Set me,</i> as a seal upon your heart, as a seal over your <i>arm</i> ; for love is strong as Death, jealousy is enduring as Sheol;
רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבתיה מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את-האהבה ונקרות לא ישטפיה	The flashes thereof (are) flames of fire, their <i>fire</i> (is) the flame of Yahweh. ⁹⁷⁵ <i>Great Waters</i> are unable to quench love and the <i>Rivers</i> cannot drown it;
אם-יתן איש את-כל-הון ביתו באהבה בוז יבוזו לו	if a man gave all the substance of his <i>house/temple</i> for love, he would be utterly condemned.

The verses that are pertinent to this dissertation can easily be removed from their context, as they seem superfluous to the main narrative of Canticles. They seem to form a coherent unit of their own, which is slightly out of place in their current context in the text due to a change of pace.⁹⁷⁶ Things that immediately strike the eye in the passages are the mention of the word ‘Beloved’ in verse 5, the enumeration in verse 6 of monstrous creatures known from the Ugaritic texts, and the parallelism of ‘Great Waters’ and ‘rivers’ in verse 7, at the very least underlying the parallelism of ‘sea’ and ‘river’ thematically.

The embedded psalm is probably older than the surrounding text, even if the book itself is dated to the Persian era. The most striking thing about the unit of three verses is the number of divinities alluded to by the text, if not openly referred to. The references to Mot, Resheph, and Yahweh have been discussed by

⁹⁷⁵ Edelman (2009, 91) writes: “Yahweh’s character is often represented via fire, a natural element that is associated with life in its provision of warmth, safety from danger, the growth of crops, and its ability to cook food, as well as with death in its destructive, consuming capacity”. She suggests (p. 92) that the association of Yahweh with fire comes from either his solar attributes or from being similar to the flames associated with the shimmering cloth of *pul(u)h(i)u* in the Mesopotamian tradition, which she suggests was derived from astral associations. However, I think that fire is also a rather natural portrayal of the divine essence or power of the Storm-God in the mortal world, ‘fire from heaven’. She makes the observation on p. 95 that in Pahlavi tradition “all fire derives ultimately from heavenly fire”, but she does not connect this conception with the divine fire in the HB. In later textual traditions, the fire may of course represent a combination of things. According to Edelman (p. 100), Ahura Mazda was represented both anthropomorphically and in a celestial form as fire, “as were Neo-Babylonian deities”, the fire being an early and traditional means of expressing divine presence. On p. 150, she suggests that a secondary association of the fire of Ahura Mazda and the lightning of Yahweh may have taken place during the Persian period.

⁹⁷⁶ This is not to claim an alternate authorship for the verses, nor to comment on their dating with regard to the framing textual content, but merely that the textual unit may be studied separately in this context.

Nissinen, for example.⁹⁷⁷ Two further divinities can also be detected: v. 5 mentions דִּוְדָה, whose connection to the monarch and the Storm-God is discussed in section 5.1.2, and which I do not view (at least primarily) as a divine moniker. V. 7, on the other hand, features the parallelism of the Great Waters (מַיִם רַבִּים)⁹⁷⁸ and the Rivers (נְהָרוֹת).

These verses seem to contrast violent imagery with the concept of love, perhaps drawing on the vocabulary and imagery of ancient Semitic poetry in doing so. Whether this was a conscious effort by the poet or an accidental throwback is difficult to ascertain. But the clustering of the mythological terms in these three verses is significant, as is the wealth of vocabulary familiar from the Ugaritic texts. It has been suggested that the song owes influence to the Hymn of Nabu and Tashmetu,⁹⁷⁹ and traditionally it has been connected with the Biblical Solomon. Whether or not the book as a whole has a connection with kingship, the psalm itself very well may. It may have been inserted into the text via the catchword דִּוְדָה, as the word ‘Beloved’ features in Canticles more frequently than in any other Biblical book. And it is the use of this term that has attracted an older poetic component, the original context of which is *kingship*, because Beloved, as I will argue, functioned as a royal epithet.

There is a passage in the Baal Cycle which may hold the key to interpreting the verses. KTU 1.4 VIII 21–28 features the following:

[tḥtan] nrt.ilm.špš	The lamp of the gods, Shapshu (is red / let her still),
šrrt.la	weak are the ? / let them blaze,
šmm.b yd.md	the heavens, at the hand of the Beloved ⁹⁸⁰
d.ilm.mt.b a	of El, Mot, from
lp.šd.rbt.k	across a thousand fields, ten thousand
mn.l p'n.mt	hectares, before Mot
hbr:w ql	they fall down and
tšthwy	prostrate themselves.

The pertinent part of this passage is the *yd* of Mot, holding here the epithet of ‘the Beloved of El’. Usually the word is translated as ‘the hand’; understanding the hand as a weapon is not only possible, but also not out of place in this context, as a display of Mot’s power. But in older translations, the word *yd* was translated

⁹⁷⁷ See Nissinen 2011, 27, for discussion and bibliography.

⁹⁷⁸ In this context and in comparison with the Ugaritic list of monstrous creatures, one also wonders whether מַיִם רַבִּים could actually originally have referenced the Sea (*il rbm*), either becoming conflated with the term ‘Great Waters’ at a later stage, intentionally subverted, or whether we should simply translate “From the Great Sea love cannot be quenched, nor rivers drown it”. Considering the use of the term *ru-ba* in the system of sponsored kingship in the Amorite kingdom period, the term מַיִם רַבִּים, ‘Great Water’, may in fact represent the closest parallel to the Ugaritic epithet *zbl ym*, ‘Prince Sea’, that we are able to find in the HB.

⁹⁷⁹ Nissinen 1998.

⁹⁸⁰ Perhaps ‘the weapon of the Beloved’?

with the meaning of ‘love’,⁹⁸¹ (perhaps partially driven by the epithet *md*), and this offers a curious contrast to the passage of Canticles.⁹⁸² I am not suggesting that the Hebrew word אֶהְבָּה should have any military connotations, but there seems to be some kind of word-play in *the love of Death* that easily pre-dates this passage of Canticles, and phallic symbolism is found in connection with chthonic divinities across cultures.

What is significant is that this imagery is found in constellation with both the moniker Beloved and the parallelism of the rivers and the Great Waters, which in this context should be seen a conceptual replacement for the Sea. With regard to the concept of the divine weapon, the use of the verb ‘to waken’ in connection with a tree (in this case, an apple tree) is interesting; in Is. 51:9, which I will discuss subsequently, the verb is given twice as a command to the divine weapon (“Awake! Awake!”). The apple tree in and of itself has never been connected to a weapon of any kind, but the choice of the ‘apple tree’ instead of a simple ‘tree’ or ‘cedar’, both of which carry connotations of the divine weapon, may function as an intentional subversion of the trope.

But to heed the old maxim *testis unus testis nullus* – one witness testifies nothing.⁹⁸³ There is much more pertinent parallel to the passage in Is. 43:1b–2, which in its current context is Yahweh’s dialogue to Jacob-Israel, representing the people of Israel.

אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי גָאֻלְתִּיךָ	“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
קָרָאתִי בְשִׁמְךָ לִי־אַתָּה:	I have called you <i>by name</i> ; you are mine.

כִּי־תַעֲבֹר בַּמַּיִם	When you <i>pass through the waters</i> ,
אֶתְּךָ־אֲנִי	I will be with you;
וּבְנָהָרוֹת	and when you <i>pass through the rivers</i> ,
לֹא־יִשְׁטְפוּךָ	they will not sweep over you.

כִּי־תֵלֵךְ בַּמֹּאֵשׁ	When you <i>walk through the fire</i> ,
לֹא־תִכָּוֶה	you will not be burned;
וְלִהְיוּ־הֵמָּה	and the flames ⁹⁸⁴
לֹא־תִבְעַר־בָּהֶם:	they will not set you ablaze”.

The context of the verse changes drastically, however, if the people are replaced

⁹⁸¹ This was done chiefly by Ginsberg & Maisler 1934, 247. They admitted that they were departing from the translation of the *editio princeps* (as well, it must be noted, from subsequent translations). According to them, it is the employment of *yd* as a masculine noun in the passage of the Baal Cycle that gives it the meaning of ‘love’ derived from the root *ydd*, paralleling the use in Canticles.

⁹⁸² Ginsberg & Maisler 1934, 248–249, in fact mention Cant. 8:6 as evidence for their interpretation of the passage in the Baal Cycle, which they viewed as a prototype for the former.

⁹⁸³ As the ‘reception-aesthetic’ (*rezeptionsästhetische*) position of Reiß & Vermeer 1984, 58, states, “ein Text ist kein Text”. I have tried to uphold this maxim in this thesis.

⁹⁸⁴ Note the similarity between אֶהְבָּה and לֶהְבֶּה, which might further explain the appearance of monarchic poetry within a poetic love narrative.

by the character of the king. This is, in fact, the context that Bonnet & Merlo suggested for the passage.⁹⁸⁵ The paired flames and the paired waters are the in reverse order compared with the passage from the Canticles, and no overt mention of Death or the other divinities is found in this passage. Regardless of which text is older, they may hark back to the same tradition. And this tradition, I submit, is the installation of a king, as many of the keywords in the passage resemble the scene of royal adoption, which I discuss in connection with the 4th column of KTU 1.1 in Chapter 5.

The passage has all the makings of a cultic ritual, and the accompanying acts are readily imaginable. But the *original function* of these traditions, in light of the evidence discussed in the previous chapters, may well have been the granting of passage through the Upper Euphrates to the Mediterranean coast, and the patronage of the divine weapons by the king in Aleppo through the means of a proto-state treaty (i.e. the political correspondence of the Amorite kings). We have vestiges of the tradition in the quotations in the Amorite letters, but the poetic verses recalling the tradition hundreds of years later suggest that public performances of the loyalty oath between the senior and junior monarchs may have been conducted – and may have been conducted more than once between the same pair of monarchs – to continually re-establish the power relation. However, the context in which the passage is presented in Isaiah, according to Bonnet & Merlo seems to echo “literary expressions typical of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology”.⁹⁸⁶

The passage is discussed by Batto in connection with the Combat Myth and the Exodus-narrative. According to him, the Exodus in the passage is interpreted as an act of divine creation, with Yahweh redeeming the people through an on-going, never-ending Exodus.⁹⁸⁷ I am not certain that there is anything particular in the passage, besides its address to Israel, which could connect it to the Exodus-narrative. The idea of passing through water is here

⁹⁸⁵ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 85. According to them, the referring of the oracles to the people instead of the king is the “only difference” between the Biblical salvation prophecies and the Neo-Assyrian oracles.

⁹⁸⁶ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 81.

⁹⁸⁷ Batto 1992, 111. N.B.: “It is difficult to capture in translation the polyvalent usage of tenses in Deutero-Isaiah. The peculiar combination of imperfect, perfect, and participial forms suggests a conscious attempt by the poet to transcend categories of past, present, and future tense”. What this suggests to me is that the redactor has used materials from various sources and not streamlined them. Furthermore, the current tenses are perfectly sensible in the context I have suggested.

paralleled by walking through fire, which is not an event in the Exodus story in any of its formulations. This suggests that walking through water has another context here. Pakkala discussed water and fire as primeval (uncreated) elements, by control over which one could demonstrate a feat of power. He even mentions a case in 1 Kgs 18 in which the prophet Elijah and Yahweh demonstrate their power over these elements in tandem against the prophets of Baal.⁹⁸⁸ This may well form the symbolic backdrop of the passages, but the specific mentions of walking through the elements also seem to recall ritual acts. It is also curious that it is found in connection with the mythic constellation associated with the Ordeal.

Through motif attraction, Is. 43 seems to recall texts of the Exodus tradition. A likelier scenario is that older poetic fragments were used to bolster the authority of the younger text. V. 34:16 is a short oracle, seeming like a recapitulation of the earlier verse: “Thus says Yahweh, the giver of a road on the sea and a way through the mighty waters” (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנוֹתֵן בָּיָם דֶּגֶר וּבְמַיִם עֲזָיִם) (נְתִיבָה). This is preceded by Yahweh’s declaration of his kingship in v. 15, “I am Yahweh... your king (מֶלֶכְכֶּם)”. I will discuss the connection between the Hebrew word דֶּרֶךְ and the Ugaritic *drkt* in more detail subsequently. It would seem that in this verse, the original parallelism may have been between *drk* and ‘ז, power and might, which after its attachment with the Exodus tradition was reinterpreted as a road through the waters, inviting a new parallel in נְתִיבָה. The original-context parallelism may have read “He, who gives the power over the sea and the strength upon the waters” or even as a question, “Who gives the power over the sea and the strength over the waters?”

A similar construction is found in vv. 19–20, in a context in which the verb ‘to give’ seems to make more sense: “I will make a path in the desert and rivers the wilderness. The beasts of the field will glorify me: the jackals (dragons?) and the ostriches, for I give water in the desert and rivers in the wilderness” (תִּכְבְּדֵנִי חַיֵּית) (אֲשִׁים בְּמִדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ בִּישְׁמוֹן נְהָרוֹת הַשְּׂדֵה תַנִּים וּבְנֹת יַעֲנָה כִּי־נָתַתִּי בְּמִדְבָּר מַיִם נְהָרוֹת בִּישְׁמוֹן). Note the similarity of the animals framed by a double mention of the rivers to the animals collected by the Assyrian kings in their royal inscriptions.⁹⁸⁹ Comparing the passage to the Babylonian *Mappa mundi*, the dragon and the ostrich may both also function as designations of particular rivers, which would explain their

⁹⁸⁸ Pakkala 2014, 312. However, he does the myths in *EE* and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle a disservice by reducing them into a “motive” of demonstrating power through control of primeval elements.

⁹⁸⁹ In fact, Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 85, compare Is. 43 specifically with Neo-Assyrian royal oracles.

appearance between the two mentions of river. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.1.3. From the extremely short oracle of v. 16 to v. 19, it would seem that the chapter contains traditions linking the Combat Myth and kingship of different ages and sources, with the redactor most likely combining texts with similar motifs. The fact that Yahweh's kingship and the passing through the waters are connected in the latter part of the chapter gives credence to the suggestion that the earlier context of the earlier passage was monarchic.

The most significant piece of evidence regarding the Amorite traditions is the summoning by name, which appears here as though a formula, "I have called you by your name: you are mine". Note also that Assyrian monarchs were "called by name" (*na-bu-ú MU-ia*) to their kingship by the monarchic divinity.⁹⁹⁰ In fact, the two acts by which the king's accession was legitimized were by making the king's name supreme and by placing the merciless weapon (^{giš}TUKUL- *šú la-a pa-da-a*) of the god into the king's hands. Calling by name and granting the weapon were the two symbolic gestures by means of which a king was made. Calling by name and claiming of the offspring, both symbolic of an adoption formula, are found here, but in the current context it is not the adoption of the monarch by the deity, but the election of the people of Israel by Yahweh.

Using a monarchic adoption formula in this context serves to increase the authority of the election. The older monarchic tradition is reframed in a new political context. The process through which the passages have been preserved is different, however. In the case of Canticles, the reason appears to be *textual*, the weaving of older poetic material into a new composition, while in the case of the Isaiah passage, it is the *tradition* itself which is borrowed to lend authority to a new concept. The original context has the appearance of a series of trials, walking through water and walking through fire (or alternatively, a military campaign from the Syrian Desert to the Mediterranean shore). Birth, Death, Sheol, and perhaps even the Desert mentioned in Canticles may have featured additional (symbolic) trials, or alternatively promises of protection made by the monarchic divinity to the monarch.⁹⁹¹

⁹⁹⁰ Cf. A.O.101.1:40–41.

⁹⁹¹ One must be wary of reconstructing hypothetical lines, but in the interest of speculation, the lines may have been something like "Set me as a seal upon your heart, for my love is as strong as Death; set me as a seal on your arm, for my protection is as fierce as Sheol". This could have accompanied the giving of some of the symbols of kingship or symbolic armour to the king, and the new king, clad in his monarchic regalia, would then have symbolically passed through fire and water. But this is purely hypothetical, as we have knowledge of neither the monarchic

While there may be some weak allusions to the River Ordeal in Biblical literature, if 14th-century Assyrian authors had trouble understanding the concept of the Ordeal, I do not think that the actual Ordeal was ever practised as a legal procedure – or the judicial practice was even thoroughly understood – in the area of ancient Israel. The references to it seem to belong to the distant past, and they appear to be heavily mythologizing. While the River Ordeal may still have been practised at the time of the writing or conception of the Ugaritic narratives, and the authors of the Ugaritic myths may have been aware of the practice, it does not seem that the River Ordeal is explicitly referred to in the Ugaritic texts.

The strongest evidence for the actual practice of the legal Ordeal seems to exist in the OB period, in the 18th century BCE, and the source of the tradition appears to have been the Amorite culture. While there is some indication that the Ordeal was employed by peoples all over the ANE,⁹⁹² the city of Id – where it took place – was in Mari territory. However, the Ordeal seems to be one of the instances in which we find vestiges of vocabulary and phrases of Mariote political correspondence in literatures hundreds of years removed from the period of the Amorite kingdoms, both in Mesopotamian and HB texts.

4.5 Summary and Discussion

The most relevant witnesses to the Combat Myth from the OB period are the political correspondence of Amorite kings and the royal inscriptions that mark the campaigns of the OB rulers to the Mediterranean shore, in addition to the texts containing the first explicit mentions of the conquest of the sea. The epistolary evidence contains three important topics: the transportation of the divine weapon of the Storm-God of Aleppo, the Ordeal by River practised in the Mariote city of

context of the text nor the assumed original form of the text. The question to ask is whether the new framework helps to explain the texts.

⁹⁹² While no suggestions have been made that the Ordeal would have been practised in ancient Egypt, there is a curious mention in the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant (BI,59–61) of not “tasting the evils of the river” (“[...]the current shall not carry you off, you shall not taste the evils of the river, you shall not see the face of fear, the darting fish shall come to you”), which according to Faulkner, Wente & Simpson (1973, f35) was a “high-flown” metaphorical way of telling the magistrate of the story that should he do justice by the plaintiff, he would prosper. Even if the Ordeal was alluded to in the text, it does not mean that it was ever practised in Egypt. It is possible that it references the Euphratean ordeal, and this is perhaps further supported by the fact that the magistrate is also extolled with the virtues of the NWS king in lines 62–64: “you are father to the orphan, you are husband to the widow, a brother to the divorced”.

Id, and the familial terminology of sponsored kingship between the Amorite rulers, which indicates royal adoption.⁹⁹³ Weapons feature prominently in ANE mythological texts, in connection with various gods. The weapons of the storm-god Baal play a pivotal role in his defeat of the sea-god Yam in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, and Marduk uses his bow to finish off the monster Tiamat. It is the connection between the weapons and the Mediterranean Sea that also ties the Sargonic traditions to the Amorite rulers.

Texts from the OB period onwards appear to provide a rather clear picture of what divine weapons were used for. The weapons were housed in temples and their main function was to witness oaths, judgments, the sealing of documents, etc. They also had a number of symbolic functions, on the basis of which they could be paraded out of the temples either in celebration or before marching armies.⁹⁹⁴ Use of the divine weapons in the coronation ceremonies of kings has also been proposed. In particular, the mentions of the divine weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo in the two texts from the royal archives of the ancient city of Mari have been connected with the concept of a coronation ceremony. It is the opinion of the author that these other mundane uses for divine weapons in the OB period should not be ignored when discussing the Storm-God's weapons in the Mari texts, especially since the textual evidence from the period seems overwhelmingly to favour uses for them other than coronation. The idea that the weapons of the Storm-God were connected to a coronation has meagre textual support. Iconographic evidence from the Syrian area as well as from the temple of the Storm-God in the Aleppo citadel seems to suggest that the weapons of the Storm-God in the OB period were portrayed as a mace and a spear (discussed in more detail in section 6.2.3).

Divine weapons are not only featured in texts and iconography, but they are also witnessed in the archaeological record. Inscribed weapons, precious weapons, and weapons discovered in temple compounds provide physical manifestations of what the divine weapons of the texts and iconographical tradition represented in the real world. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a divine weapon and an ordinary weapon in the archaeological record. Not all prestige weapons made of precious materials were intended to be used or actually used as divine weapons. There also seems to have been ways in which

⁹⁹³ See section 5.1.2.

⁹⁹⁴ E.g. ARM 26:386 explicitly mentions the god of the king marching before the king's army.

weapons that appeared quite ordinary could be consecrated as divine weapons.

The author has proposed four conditions that a weapon should meet in order to be considered a divine weapon. These include precious materials used in the making of the weapons, their discovery in cultic sites, inscriptions on the weapons dedicating them to deities, and other features which might make the weapons unsuitable for normal human use.⁹⁹⁵ Weapons are mentioned in connection to Yahweh in several Biblical texts, but whether these were references to the kind of actual divine weapon that manifested in the temple of the divinities in the OB period is impossible to know. What we can derive from the texts is a connection between the Storm-God and a weapon, even at the time of the writing of the Hebrew texts, and that on certain occasions the idea of the weapon of the Storm-God was used to bolster the authority of the monarch. There are few textual links between the OB weapons of the Storm-God and Biblical texts, but the Mariote witnesses are necessary for discussion on the context of the references to the Combat Myth in the HB texts.

In addition to these concepts, the Mari letters also contain several references to Ordeal by River, which may have drawn its legitimization from the Combat Myth. The amount of possible allusions to the OB practice of the Ordeal by River in Biblical poetry seems somewhat surprising. It is curious that rushing waters and legal terminology are found in connection with one another even in these Hebrew texts of the first millennium. There seem to be some extremely archaic features in the Biblical passages, all of which are in fact poetic – and poetry does more easily retain archaicizing language and ideas. The texts have more affinity to the OB language used to discuss the Ordeal than to the later forms that surfaced from the Middle Assyrian era onward, and it was during the Middle Assyrian period that the Ordeal began to be mythologized. Furthermore, the mythological justification of the OB Ordeal seems to have been in the Combat Myth. How widely the Ordeal was practised in the ANE is up for speculation. The practice seems to have dwindled after the destruction of Mari and its cultic sites, and it certainly changed in both focus and form during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, although it is difficult to know whether the gradual abandoning of the practice was caused by the downfall of the Mari kingdom. There does not seem to be any evidence indicating that Ordeal by River was ever

⁹⁹⁵ See Töyräänvuori 2012.

actually practised in Palestine, or elsewhere on the Levantine littoral.

While it is doubtful that the texts of the HB made references to the OB Ordeal, it is possible that the authors of the Biblical texts referenced not a living legal practice, but borrowed from a poetic tradition once inspired by the Ordeals of the OB period. If the Mariote origins of the Ordeal are to be believed – and certainly the epistolary evidence from the city of Mari suggests that it was a formidable practice there at one time – then in the texts of the HB, where traces of this practice may be seen, we glimpse texts where the original Amorite and later Babylonian traditions were interwoven well before their recording into the text of the HB. Relevant to this thesis, it is an example of the *indirect borrowing* of texts which have their origin in the traditions of the Combat Myth, and the *increasing tendency to mythologize* the concepts after they were removed from the context of their real-world uses and functions.

It is doubtful that the Biblical texts reference the historical practice. If the peoples from these areas had practised the Ordeal in the OB period (of which no textual evidence exists), then hypothetically they would have gone to the city of Id to do it, the same as everyone else. While many of the ostensible traces of the Ordeal can be found in Biblical poetry, the passages in the Hebrew texts seem to bear little connection to the idea of kingship. As an instrument of the king's judicial power in the Amorite Bronze Age, however, the source of the concept is ultimately rooted in kingship and the king's role as a judge on behalf of the monarchic divinity, drawing this authority from the Storm-God's subjugation of the waters, whence the executive power of the king was ultimately derived. In the case of the Hebrew texts, this association is not obvious, which strongly suggests that it was never a living practice in the area of Palestine.

If the concept of the Ordeal is to be read into some of the Biblical references discussed in the previous chapters, then it is likely that they were written at a time that the mythology of the judicial ordeal had been incorporated into the Combat Myth, as the Ordeal seems to draw its mythological justification from the myth, even if it may not originally have had any connection to it. As this conflation seems to have happened both in the Babylonian and in the NWS traditions, this factor alone cannot be used to determine sources of influence in the Biblical texts. The purpose of employing this poetic vocabulary in the Hebrew texts is probably to archaize the texts to which these passages have been attached, which may already have been the way in which texts of this type were used in the

Middle Assyrian period.

Two points must be emphasized at this juncture: while the Combat Myth was the underlying justification for the Ordeal versions of the myth featuring a river instead of the sea do not *necessarily* contain references to the Ordeal, but may display local variations of the Combat Myth where the myth was tied to some local body of water. But it is also possible that some of the texts discussed here could reference the river in allusion to the cultic functions of the king, emphasizing the king's role as judge in order to legitimize his dual role as an executive and a judiciary. While the kings of Palestine may never have overseen ordeals of this nature, the underlying mythology served to legitimize the judicial role of the king, representing a divine guarantee of the king's judgements. Ordeal by River is one specific and therefore traceable example of Amorite culture known to us through the Mari texts which was disseminated all over the area of the ANE during the Amorite kingdom period. One of the recipients of Amorite religion and political ideology, temporally closer to ancient Israel, seems to have been ancient Ugarit, which I will discuss in the next Chapter.

5. Your Servant is Baal, O Sea: The Sea of Combat Myth in Ugarit

5.1 The Sea of Combat Myth in the Baal Cycle

5.1.1 The Myth of Divine Combat in KTU 1.1–1.2

In this chapter I discuss the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.1–KTU 1.6),⁹⁹⁶ not as a whole but instead by concentrating only on the portions bearing on the NWS Combat Myth.⁹⁹⁷ The first sub-chapter contains discussion on the Ugaritic Combat Myth and its interpretation in general, while the following chapters concentrate on specific questions pertaining to the topic of the thesis. The Baal Cycle is without doubt the single most important witness to the NWS Combat Myth surviving to modern times, as well as our main source of information concerning it. The portions of the Baal Cycle which have to do with the battle of Baal and Yamm (mainly the first two tablets) are one of the more popular Ugaritic texts in research, and they have been translated by many esteemed scholars.⁹⁹⁸ The Baal Cycle is dated to the reign of Niqmaddu III (c. 1225–1215) following the discovery of the tablet RS 1992.2016,⁹⁹⁹ although this is merely the physical age of the text, not its composition.¹⁰⁰⁰

I have already described the contents of the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle and my reading of them in section 3.2, but a short recapitulation is in order. The events of the beginning of the Baal Cycle were outlined by Malamat as follows:

⁹⁹⁶ The *editio princeps* of most of the tablets in the Baal Cycle published between 1932–1938, in *CTA* and the journal *Syria* X and XII, was by Virolleaud. For details on the publication of each column and tablet, see Smith 1994; Smith & Pitard 2009. For the find context of the tablets, see KTU³. The tablets of the Baal Cycle were discovered in the so-called Library of the High Priest (which was possibly the location of a scribal school) in the city of Ugarit between the years 1929–1933. Not all of the tablets were found in the same find spot. See Smith 1994b, 1; 1997, 82. Physically, the tablets were written between the years 1400–1350 BCE according to Smith 1997a, 81, although more recently attempts have been made to date them to the reign of Niqmaddu III in the late 13th century (c. 1225–1215). See Tugendhaft 2012a, 368 for a bibliography. The date of their composition remains an open question, however, and Smith admits that there are layers present in the text that witness to a longer development, even if one should view the extant texts as an original composition by the scribe Ilumilku. Albright (1932, 185) already wrote: “Our tablets date from the fifteenth century B. C., though they may have been copied over a considerable period, while their original form may be older still”.

⁹⁹⁷ Several monographs have been written outlining and examining the narrative of the Baal Cycle. See Smith 1994b, 1997. For a concise history of Ugarit, see Loretz 1990, 1–13.

⁹⁹⁸ A representative (although not exhaustive) sample can be found in Virolleaud 1935; Gaster 1939; Ginsberg 1950; Caquot 1974; Del Olmo Lete 1981; Bordreuil & Pardee 1993; Dietrich & Loretz 1997; Smith 1997a; Wyatt 1998; Niehr 2015.

⁹⁹⁹ For an edition of the text, see Dalix 1996 and more recently Bordreuil, Pardee & Hawley 2012. The text is a bilingual written by the hand of Ilumilku, the scribe.

¹⁰⁰⁰ According to an alternative chronology, the tablet would have coincided with the reign of Niqmaddu IV. See Arnaud 1998, 153–173.

The god Yamm, beloved son of El, the head of the Ugaritic pantheon, seeks majestic status. El proclaims that status for himself and promotes the construction of Yamm's palace, but Baal, another son of El, is jealous and battles Yamm for hegemony. Eventually it is Baal, with the help of his sister, the goddess Anat, who strikes the fateful blow for power. It is then that Baal rises to kingship and erects his palace, similar to the event in Mari.¹⁰⁰¹

The problem with outlines of this kind, useful as they can be in relating the general idea of the epic, is that they give far too neat a picture of the narrative in the text. Malamat does impress the fragmentariness of the extant text,¹⁰⁰² but the interpretation of every part of his outline above could be, and at one point or another has been, called into question.¹⁰⁰³ It is also unclear to the author what the "event in Mari" in the above paragraph refers to. Is it the brief mention of the Aleppan god giving his weapons to the king of Mari, or is it Zimri-Lim's own rise to power that mirrors the narrative of the Baal Cycle?

While Malamat suggested that the mention of the weapons in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, which he considers the major source for the divinity of the sea, "leads us straight to Ugarit of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries" from the Mari of 18th century BCE, and that the same myth known from the Mari texts is prominently featured centuries later in the myths and epics of Ugarit,¹⁰⁰⁴ I would issue more caution. A link between the Baal Cycle, whose *origins* may well hark back to Zimri-Lim's time but the extant remnants of which date to the 13th century in the LBA,¹⁰⁰⁵ and this obscure allusion to the Storm-God of Aleppo conquering the sea from the 18th century in the MBA, makes comparisons between the two inarguably diachronic. The Ugaritic texts at our disposal have been dated to the reign of King Niqmaddu II (c. 1349–1315) and later, as the older texts from Ugarit, some of which may have been contemporary to the Mari texts, appear to have been destroyed in an earthquake.¹⁰⁰⁶ As the texts stand now, there is a gap of some five hundred years between the Mari texts and the oldest Ugaritic texts.¹⁰⁰⁷

Malamat suggested that the Ugaritic texts may actually have originated in

¹⁰⁰¹ Malamat 1998, 28.

¹⁰⁰² Malamat 1998, 28.

¹⁰⁰³ But researchers in the past had no such reservations. See e.g. Murtonen 1952, 91: "The poem is fragmentary, it is true, but we can at least deduce from it that 'Il in the poem urges his son Yw/Ym to take revenge on Ba'al for the disrespect he has shown towards 'Il'".

¹⁰⁰⁴ Malamat 1998, 28, 34.

¹⁰⁰⁵ E.g. Redford (1992, 44) claims that the texts which are from the LBA are "certainly derived from material millennia earlier". I would formulate the thought differently: while we have textual evidence of the traditions from the OB period and the LBA, the originally Amorite traditions likely survived and developed in the interim as well.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Singer 1990, 730.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Astour 1981, 4; Bimson 2005, 59–60; Wyatt 2005a, 136.

the OB period, the age of Mari.¹⁰⁰⁸ Of course, if we were to posit that the transference of the Amorite tradition to Ugarit happened contemporaneously with Zimri-Lim's reign and continued to develop there into the form that we find in the 13th-century texts, it would explain the scarceness of references to the tradition in other sources (like the MA texts) from the 17th to 14th centuries.¹⁰⁰⁹ What is curious is that Zimri-Lim seems to have personally visited the city of Ugarit during his life time, in the 9th year of his reign.¹⁰¹⁰ But Zimri-Lim's campaign is not the only point of contact between Mari and Ugarit. There are letters published by Dossin¹⁰¹¹ from a king of Ugarit to Mari, where the king expresses his wish for his son to visit and see Zimri-Lim's palace, probably in awe of its reputation. If word of the splendour of the palace of Mari kings had reached Ugarit, there is no reason why Mariote mythology or even royal legends may not have been known by the Ugaritians. And if the son of an Ugaritic king did indeed visit the palace of Mari, Mariote royal ideology would have been intimately witnessed by him. It is even possible, although not textually evidenced (bearing in mind the lack of witnesses from both Aleppo and Ugarit prior to the 14th century), that Ugarit was among Aleppo's sponsored kingdoms alongside Mari.

While most scholars have been occupied by finding correlations or influences between the Ugaritic and Biblical texts, perhaps too little attention has been paid to how Mariote culture may have influenced the texts from Ugarit. There are established points of contact between Mari and Ugarit in the EBA. Mariote religion was also familiar in Ugarit, as evidenced by the names of Astarte of Mari (*ttrt mrh*, KTU 1.100:34) and Dagan of Tuttul (*dgn ttlh*, KTU 1.100:15) in the Ugaritic texts. Tuttul, the ancient seat of the Mari monarchy, was geographically closer to Aleppo than it was to Mari. The Storm-God of Aleppo (*b'l hlb*) was well known in Ugarit, and he is mentioned in several texts.¹⁰¹² So while direct points of contact between Ugarit and Mari may be scarce, there is reason enough to believe that Ugarit was involved in the political system of the Amorite kingdoms of the OB period, whether as a sponsored kingdom, a vassal kingdom, or a trading partner. Amorite tribes invaded the Levantine coast during

¹⁰⁰⁸ He claims that this is "an assumption now supported by the material from Mari". Malamat 1998, 28.

¹⁰⁰⁹ We do not have archives from Yamhadian vassals or other recipients of the Amorite traditions from this era.

¹⁰¹⁰ Sasson 1984; Malamat 1998, 35–36. On the difficulty of following Zimri-Lim's regnal year formulas, see Heimpel 2003, 54–55.

¹⁰¹¹ Dossin 1970, 17–44. Cf. texts 30:3 and 32:4.

¹⁰¹² KTU 1.109:16; 1.130:11; 1.134:7; 1.148:26, likely also in the administrative text 4.728:1–2.

the Intermediate Period, during an Egyptian decline (2300–2100).¹⁰¹³ It is likely that the myth was introduced in the NWS cities of the seaboard during this time. But what can we learn from the contents of the text itself?

In *Poetics* 1451a:20, Aristotle argued against people who think that just because Heracles was a single individual, all texts pertaining to him must have a unified plot. This criticism is not out of place with the interpretation of the texts of the Baal Cycle – and his example is made all the more pertinent by the association of Heracles with Baal in the figure of the Tyrian Melqart (e.g. KAI 201). The unity of plot has to do with the singularity of *action*, and in the so-called Baal Cycle we have several actions, action being a representation which may contain several component incidents: if the presence or absence of a plot point makes no difference to the overall plot, then it is not an integral part of it (e.g. Baal's battle against Yamm is not an integral component of his battle against Mot and vice versa). And although the texts we have at our perusal may have been authored by a single scribe (possibly in the interests of an ideological programme of the Ugaritic dynasty), this does not mean that they were necessarily and originally *composed* by him, as there is reason to believe that the traditions of the Storm-God's battle against the sea made first contact with the Eastern Mediterranean area in the OB period.¹⁰¹⁴ The text may contain more than one iteration of the tradition.

Meier (1986) has suggested that the tablets of the Baal Cycle may actually contain two different versions of the battle between Yamm and Baal, evidenced by the different nomenclature used for Yamm in different sections of the text.¹⁰¹⁵ Meier argued on this basis that the second tablet is not a part of the same whole as the rest of the tablets.¹⁰¹⁶ This proposition has received surprisingly little attention from scholars over the years. But the different nomenclature used for Yamm in the first tablet and the second tablet is significant. While the text of the first tablet is badly broken, the main story between Baal and Yamm is in KTU 1.2, which begins with the sending of Yamm's envoys in Col. I¹⁰¹⁷ and ends with the

¹⁰¹³ Jidejian 1992, 32.

¹⁰¹⁴ Korpel 1998 concedes this point on p. 91.

¹⁰¹⁵ While there may be repetition of certain themes in the texts, and portions of poetry are repeated in different contexts, it still bears mentioning that there are no actual duplicates found among the poetic texts of Ugarit. According to Albright (1934, 102), this suggested that only a single copy of each existed.

¹⁰¹⁶ Meier 1986.

¹⁰¹⁷ Tugendhaft (2012a, 383–384) offers his own translation of the first column.

important proclamation of Baal's kingship in Col. IV.¹⁰¹⁸ Del Olmo Lete described Baal's attempts to defeat Yamm in 1.2 as containing the sort of "repetitive system of magic" that we find in some of the incantational texts from Ugarit.¹⁰¹⁹

Note that Tugendhaft actually propounded the view that the Baal Cycle itself was a critical reflection on the foundational claims of the Ugaritic monarchy with regard to the Bronze Age political institutions, having been written to call into question the hierarchical principle that justified these institutions. His argument is that the Baal Cycle presents political positions, such as vassal and suzerain, which represent the idea of hierarchy but at the same time it unsettles the traditional basis of sovereignty; thus it does not affirm the principle that the hierarchy depends on.¹⁰²⁰ I am unconvinced by his thesis: the unsettling of the traditional basis of sovereignty is not the intention – nor the outcome – of the Baal Cycle, but quite the opposite. Monarchic rule is unstable by its very nature, requiring re-legitimation by every successive monarch. The foundation of monarchic rule must be resettled by each ruler who claims the title, and that is one of the main functions of the myth. The fact that the myth acknowledges this instability does not mean that it advocates it.

The Baal Cycle could perhaps be read as a commentary on the nature of monarchic power in the Bronze Age economies of the Eastern Mediterranean, but it is this only inadvertently. The Baal Cycle, like all myths of divine combat, functioned as the very affirmation of the political system. The Storm-God's conquest of the sea made not only him king of the gods, but it made the king, whose society used the myth as a foundational myth of monarchic rule, king over his subjects. There is nothing in the narrative of the Baal Cycle that unsettles the basis of monarchy; functioning as it does as a confirmation of it. However, my main objection to interpreting the Baal Cycle as a commentary on the Ugaritic vassalage is that the myth which was employed in the writing of the Baal Cycle is far older than the Ugaritic vassalage to the Hittites. It is older even than the Aleppan sponsorship of Mari, if the Eshnunnaean school text discussed in section 4.1 is in reference of it. But there are connections between the Amorite traditions and the Baal Cycle, which I will discuss in the following chapters.

According to Wyatt, the Baal Cycle was written for the use of the Ugarit

¹⁰¹⁸ Note that the order of the columns of the second tablet has never been called into question.

¹⁰¹⁹ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 39.

¹⁰²⁰ Tugendhaft 2012a, 368–369.

royal institution, with the narrative corresponding to the position of Ugarit between the empires of the Hittites and the Egyptians.¹⁰²¹ This interpretation of the text seems somewhat strained, and its abstract political subtext is perhaps a little too modern. But if the Baal Cycle was indeed written as subtext for the political reality of the LBA, most likely it would have centred on the life of a real and actual king rather than on an abstract notion of a “city-state”, akin to Ugarit. There are few candidates from the city of Ugarit which might match the protagonists of such an awesome and grandiose tale of battle and political intrigue, but we do have just such a candidate from Mari. While the physical age of the texts from Ugarit dates from c. 1425–1190 BCE (and the Baal Cycle itself from the 13th century),¹⁰²² well after the destruction of Mari, it is entirely possible that mythological compositions, such as we find in the Baal Cycle, may have had a longer prehistory. But it is more likely that we are dealing with archetypes than real personages.

Wyatt discussed the possibility that of the characters of the Baal Cycle, the gods Baal and Anat were not native to Ugarit, but had come to the area with a wave of Amorite migrations.¹⁰²³ De Moor suggested that the Ugaritic ruling class (as well as the proto-Israelites) were of Amorite extraction.¹⁰²⁴ It is possible that Amorites spread into the cities south of the Syrian heartland at least after the Hittite conquest of Yamhad, but the textual evidence for these migrations is meagre. Yet it does follow that the Amorite mythologies surrounding the divinities may have come to the Eastern Mediterranean from the former Amorite capitals. Unfortunately, none of the literature from the city of Ugarit from the OB period remains, but it is likely that the city had a relationship with Aleppo and Mari in the period of the Amorite kingdoms, whether as a sponsored kingdom, vassal, or trading partner; accordingly to find Amorite conceptions in the later texts of the city is unsurprising.

It must be stressed that the Baal Cycle is not a creation story and no creation story of any kind has been found in the Ugaritic corpus. While one may or may not have existed (and one may well have, based on the existence of Berossus’ *Theogony*), one cannot base comparative studies on a hypothetical

¹⁰²¹ Wyatt 2005c, 252. Smith (1997a, 85) also described Baal’s battle against Yamm and Mot as a metaphor for Ugarit’s position between the Egyptians and the Hittites.

¹⁰²² Redford 1992, 144.

¹⁰²³ Wyatt 2005a, 20, 33. De Langhe (1958, 136), however believed that Baal and Anat represented the syncretism of two separate pantheons at Ugarit.

¹⁰²⁴ De Moor 1996, 227.

myth. There is one late reference to the Combat Myth in *Baba Bathra* 74b, where the creation of the world and God's slaying of the "prince of the Sea" are connected. While the Talmudic passage does attest to an extremely late conception of the myth, paralleling as it does the sea and Rahab, it is possible that the connection of creation and the slaying of the monster owes more to Babylonian influence than to the ancient NWS myth. Smith argued that instances of "divine antipathy" (a rather ambiguous term) toward creatures such as Leviathan and Behemoth in Rabbinic literature preserve as well elaborate older versions of the "West Semitic conflict myth".¹⁰²⁵ We should not read a creation myth into the text, as interpreting it is difficult enough without such extrapolations.

One further factor that deserves examination with regard to the political contents of the Baal Cycle is the question of authorship. Much of the Baal Cycle is thought to have been written down – and, according to many, even authored – by a single scribe, Ilumilku.¹⁰²⁶ Wyatt has suggested that the Baal Cycle was a wedding song composed by the scribe Ilumilku for the wedding of the King Niqmaddu (III or IV) of Ugarit and the Hittite princess Ehli-Nikkal.¹⁰²⁷ De Moor, on the other hand, argued that Ilumilku had a theological agenda of some sort.¹⁰²⁸ Even if that were the case, even if Ilumilku had been the sole composer of the Baal Cycle, it is clear that he would have drawn heavily from tradition and from existent mythology. Had the Baal Cycle been the creative work of a single hand (and not just copied or arranged by one person), it does – and must – affect our reading of the work, regardless of how widespread the mythology was on the basis of which the author composed his work. However, even if the text contained an immediate political agenda reflecting the position of the city of Ugarit during the reign of Niqmaddu III, the position which both Smith and Wyatt seem to favour, the influences of the Amorite political mythology on the narratives are obvious, repeating as they do the phrases and vocabulary of the Amorite political

¹⁰²⁵ Smith 1994b, 236.

¹⁰²⁶ According to Wyatt (2005c, 247, 251) wrote 4,250 lines of text at Ugarit, half of which survive in the discovered texts, containing portions of all of the three great epics – a testament to his great authority in the transmission of the texts.

¹⁰²⁷ Wyatt 2005b, 704–705; 2005c 251–252. See also Smith 2001a, 159. Something that may be used to argue against the idea of the Baal Cycle as a royal wedding song is that none of the tablets were found in the palace archives, but were instead found in the library of the high priest, the area of the scribal school adjunct to the temples of Ugarit. See De Langhe 1958, 141. It was not the royal family that needed to be educated in the political mythology, but the administrative elite, as the indoctrination of the dynastic line most likely took place organically in the daily life of the court.

¹⁰²⁸ De Moor 1990, 99–100.

correspondence often word for word. And it is in comparison to the Amorite texts that we may uncover the meaning of some of the more obscure parts of the Ugaritic myth.

5.1.2 The Royal Adoption Scene¹⁰²⁹

Smith & Pitard (2009) interpreted the Baal Cycle as an account of royal succession set on the mythological plane.¹⁰³⁰ Central to this conception, and to understanding the text as a political myth, is the broken column of KTU 1.1 IV 12–20:

<i>tgr.il.bnh. tr[</i>	<i>]</i>	El appoints his son, the Bull
<i>w y'n.ltpn.il.dp[id</i>	<i>]</i>	And El, gentle of h[earth], answers:
<i>šm.bny.yw¹⁰³¹.ilt[</i>	<i>]</i> ¹⁰³²	...the name of my son (is?) ??, O Elat
<i>w p'r.šm.ym [</i>	<i>]</i>	and he calls the name of Yamm
<i>t'nyyn . l¹⁰³³ zntn.[</i>	<i>]</i>	they answered: for ??
<i>at.adn.tp'r¹⁰³⁴ [</i>	<i>]</i>	she/they will call you Lord ¹⁰³⁵
<i>ank.ltpn.il [. d pid</i>	<i>]</i>	I am El, gentle [of heart,]
<i>'l.ydm.p'r[</i>	<i>]</i>	over the hands (that are set), I pronounce
<i>šmk.mdd.i[l</i>	<i>]</i>	your name, beloved of El

This text, which has defied coherent translation and comprehension due to its fragmentary nature, has nonetheless fascinated many scholars. As is obvious from the layout of the transliteration above, the column is broken off in the middle, and

¹⁰²⁹ Portions of this chapter have been published in FS Niehr (Töyräänvuori 2015).

¹⁰³⁰ See also Pitard 2013, where he fleshes out the theory. On p. 204, he submits that the focus of the narrative is between the elder king and the young successor, but as I discuss in this chapter, the relationship between a senior king and a junior king seems likelier in light of the OB background.

¹⁰³¹ In earlier research the word has also been read as *yr*. Cooper 1981, 367; Murtonen 1951, 6. Murtonen (1952, 49) saw no reason to assume the letter is anything other than a *w*.

¹⁰³² Wyatt (2005a, 19) adds the word *ym* to line 14 and *nhr* to line 15, translating “Yam is the name of my son, Lord of the gods is Nahar!” Wyatt (2005b, 711), however, admits that the translations are “inevitably provisional”. Wyatt employed Murtonen 1952, 49–50, but Murtonen not only has a different translation of the words (“The name of my son is Yw ‘Il(m?)”), he also divides the lines into colons differently. See also Aistleitner 1959, 34. De Moor 1990, 113–114, has also translated the verses, adding the negation *l* to the line “My son [shall not be called] by the name of Yw”. This interpretation seems unlikely, both on the basis of syntax and context: for El to deny the name, either someone would have previously had to have called Yamm by the name, someone else should have offered that Yamm be called by the name *yw*, or it would have had some highly offensive connotations obvious to the reader. The difficulty in interpretation is a direct result of our ignorance of the meaning of the word ‘*yw*’. For further translations, see Smith 1997a, 89; Sanders 2004, 167.

¹⁰³³ Perhaps *l* could also be interpreted as a negation here. The line could be a response from Judge River and Prince Sea (i.e. ‘they’) to El: Not even begrudgingly will we call you our Lord.

¹⁰³⁴ The word *tp'r* can be interpreted in various ways, but under no circumstances can it represent the sg.2.m person of the imperfect or the jussive. On the verb *p'r*, the basic meaning of which is proclamation, see Sanders 2004, 167.

¹⁰³⁵ Note that in KTU 1.2 I 33–34, Yamm presents himself to the assembly as the *adn* and *b'l* of the gods.

only the beginnings of each line have been preserved. The scene is pivotal enough for the interpretation of the Baal Cycle as a whole that we must be cautious in our reading of the text, but it is also of utmost importance to figure out what the text is actually about. Many items of the semantic cluster featured in Col. IV are found not only in Mari texts but also in Biblical psalms, and although the Hebrew texts are much later, it may be useful to review the scene against these Biblical texts.¹⁰³⁶

Because the break in the tablet on l. 15 follows immediately after the word *ym*, it would only be prudent to admit the possibility that the divine name Yamm may not even be mentioned in the tablet at all, as this is the sole occurrence of the word in the column. The usual epithets of the god and its parallelism with *nhr* cannot be used to identify the god. The continuation of l.15 *w p'r.šm.ym*[] could ostensibly be deduced from l. 20, which reads *šmk mdd i*[l]. If the lines are in antithetic poetic parallelism in spite of not strictly forming a bicolon, they could read *w p'r.šm.ym* [*mdd il*] / *šmk.mdd.i*[*l ym*] (“And he proclaims the name of Yamm: Beloved of El / Your name (is) Beloved of El, Yamm”). If the *y* in l. 15 is read as a vocative, it would fit well with the proclamation of a name: *w p'r.šm.ym*[*dd (il?)*] (“And he proclaims the name: O Beloved (of El?)”). In both cases the name of Yamm or his epithet is inserted, assuming that it is Yamm that is proclaimed by El. But as noted, the reading of the single instance of the name of Yamm in the column is far from certain, as the usual markers of the divine name are absent.

Both Smith and Wyatt have seen in the text of Col. IV a coronation ceremony, although they have interpreted it in different ways. I think coronation may be an over-interpretation, particularly of the text in light of the scarcity of

¹⁰³⁶ There have been few studies in the terminology of non-symbolic, familial adoption in the ANE. The major work is probably E. C. Stone & D. I. Owen's *Adoption in Old Babylonian Nippur and the Archive of Mannum-mešu-liššur* (Winona Lake, IN: 1991). It does not appear that actual adoption involved a formula of the pronouncement of the child's name, making it solely a feature of symbolic adoption. Divine adoption has also been studied in the context of the New Testament, e.g. in J. M. Scott's *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation Into the Background of Yiothesia in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen: 1992) and Y. Levin's *Jesus 'Son of God' and 'Son of David': The 'Adoption' of Jesus into the Davidic Line* (JSNT: 2006). The adoption formulas of the ANE were also compared with the Biblical texts by S. M. Paul, “Adoption Formulae: A Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Legal Clauses,” *Maarav* 2 (1979-80): 173-85, which I have been unable to consult for this work. The sources for familial adoption in the Neo-Babylonian period were collected and examined more recently by Wunsch 2003/2004. According to her (p. 184), the adoption documents had two types of formulas: objective style and dialogue style. The formulas in the former style were *ana mārūti nadānu/leqū* (“to give/take into sonship”) and *PN₁ mārū ša PN₂ šū* (“PN₁ is (henceforth) the son of PN₂”). The formula in the latter style was *lū mārūa attā* (“May you be my son!”). The children are not named in these documents in the sense of being given a name (or a new name) – the names of the adoptees are certainly frequently mentioned.

evidence we have for ancient coronations, but certainly the ‘calling by name’ of a king may be indicated. Belnap, discussing l. 22, writes: “In this case, because the text is damaged, it is unclear as to which of these values [of *bd*] is correct. If it is the first then the reading of the text should be associated with the inauguration of Baal and the text is to be placed later in the myth”.¹⁰³⁷ While it is the view of the author that the column belongs right where the ancient writer intended it, as to claim otherwise is to impose a narrative (or even a metanarrative) on the text, the assigning of roles in this text should perhaps be re-examined. The information that can be gleaned from the column includes mention of “the heights of Saphon” [mr]ym *špn* – the topic of which is either under discussion in the text or where the action in the text takes place (but again, the extant text reads *ym špn*) – and mention of El’s appointment of “his son // the bull” *tgr.il.bnh.tr* . [] on l.12, where *tr* probably refers to El himself in parallel. The line should probably be compared with KTU 1.3 V 35–36 (N.B. that 1.3 IV 2–3 has been used to fill in l. 24 in the KTU edition, so the third column may indeed contain cross-references between the tablets): *tr.il.abh.il/mlk.d yknhh*, “Bull El, his father, the god who establishes him as king”. If 1.1 IV 12 is an inversion of this phrase (to the effect of *tgr il bnh tr* [*mlk d yknh*]), then it would frame the column as discussing the installation of a king. But as it is, the word *mlk* also does not appear in the text, and interpreting it in connection with kingship is conjecture.

One of the facets that has most interested scholars is the word *yw* (possibly pronounced ‘yāwu’) on line 14, often interpreted as an alternative or variant name of Yamm,¹⁰³⁸ and its possible connection with the name Yahweh.¹⁰³⁹ Murtonen

¹⁰³⁷ Belnap 2011, 47.

¹⁰³⁸ Murtonen 1951, 11; Cooper 1981, 367; De Moor 1990, 106. The phonemes *w* and *m* are notorious for sliding into one another (also in the area of Palestine, according to Murtonen). For example, the Akkadian *awilum* developed into Babylonian *amīlum*, whereas in Late Babylonian *w* again often replaced *m* (the shift also seems to work in both ways; e.g. *ar-ma-da* for the name of Arwad in Tiglath-Pileser I’s inscription, RIMA 2 A.0.87.3:20–21). For a modern example of the phenomenon, one need only look at Bavarian (*Wir* > *Mia*). The phenomenon is not attested in Ugaritic, however.

¹⁰³⁹ Discussion in Smith 2001a, 145–146. While De Moor (1990, 114) is opposed to the connection between Yahweh and *yw*, he does admit that it is philologically sound (and on pp. 115–117 he lists commonalities between Yahweh and Yamm). There were some attempts, decades ago, to connect the name יהוה אֱלֹהִים (of which there are 32 occurrences in the HB) with Yamm (Murtonen 1951; Maclaurin 1962; Cooper 1981), reading the latter as ‘אֱלֹהֵי יָם’ (Cooper 1981, 368: “The god Yamm”, quoting Maclaurin 1962, 450: “Eloha-yam (the God Yam)”). While I have argued in this thesis that it may be possible to read the Ugaritic construction ‘*il ym*’ as ‘the god Yamm’ rather than the usual ‘(Beloved) of El, Yamm’, this theory seems rather far-fetched, and it does not appear that anyone has picked up on it since Cooper’s article in 1981.

Nevertheless, more popular connections have been made between the *yw* and *ym* of the Ugaritic texts, on the one hand, and between *yw* of the Ugaritic text and the Hebrew Yahweh, on the other. Opposing this view, Day 2000, 15, does not believe that the god Yahweh was of

went so far as to suggest that “among the Israelites also there were people who regarded these two deities as identical”.¹⁰⁴⁰ Wyatt, on the other hand, proposed that *yw* is not a proper name at all, but a title or epithet, the meaning of which corresponds to ‘lord’.¹⁰⁴¹ Loretz was more careful, admitting that the passage is so badly destroyed that it is impossible to make any safe interpretations about its meaning.¹⁰⁴² Erring on the side of caution may be prudent, especially with regard to a topic as controversial as the origins of the name of Yahweh,¹⁰⁴³ but the text is so important and central to the understanding of the entire Baal Cycle that it is not possible to not engage its interpretation here. The *yw* of line 14 of this text appears as the sole incidence of this word (whether it is to be interpreted as a name or not) in the Ugaritic corpus, and therefore theories positing the existence of a divinity by this name in Ugarit seem to overstate the evidence.¹⁰⁴⁴ Both KTU² and KTU³ also add a comment of “[lg. *y<m> w*”, seeming to suggest that there is space for an omitted sign or a space between the *y* and the *w*, and that the *w* begins a new

‘Canaanite’ origin. The reason for speculation of this kind seems to be in the desire to prove that Yahweh was once worshipped outside of Palestine, before the time of ancient Israel. See Murtonen 1951, 3–4. Habel (1964, 58–67) also viewed the traditions of the Combat Myth in the HB as polemic against the god Baal, because unlike Baal, Yahweh does not need ‘El’s permission’ for his temple theophany. This may misconstrue the intention of the political vocabulary of the Baal Cycle, which may have reflected the political organization of its day (or the past) through the description of divine hierarchies.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Murtonen 1952, 91–92. He further remarks that if the passage of the Baal Cycle referred to two different divinities, the poem would be broken into two separate unconnected pieces, and therefore *yw* and *ym* must refer to one and the same being by two different names.

¹⁰⁴¹ Wyatt 2005a, 19. Murtonen (1952, 89) thought the same regarding the name Yahweh. Although he discussed *yw* as the proper name of a divinity, he also translated the Ugaritic passage *yw il(m)* with “the Lord of the gods”; Wyatt’s proposal accords with this. The weakness of the proposal is that we find *yw* used as an epithet or a title nowhere else, whether in the Ugaritic corpus or elsewhere – unless the Biblical Yahweh is interpreted as an epithet.

¹⁰⁴² Loretz 1990, 88. He further remarks that the proposed connection between the names *yw* and Yahweh is distant at best.

¹⁰⁴³ For discussion on the name of Yahweh, see Thompson 1992; Jenni 1997; Van der Toorn 1999.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Murtonen (1951, 10) for example, states that “in the Ugaritic pantheon there is a god Yw”; Murtonen (1952, 53) continues: “In the Ugaritic pantheon there is a god by name Yw”. The name, however, is not mentioned in any of the god-lists found at Ugarit. Maclaurin (1962, 449–450) also suggests that Yamm would have been known by two names at Ugarit and that Yamm would have been the original form of the name Yahweh, thus explaining why the cult of Baal was seen as attacking Yahweh or Yah in the Hebrew texts (Stoltz (1999, 739–749) also discussed the possibility of the cult of Baal having overcome the older cult of Yamm at Ugarit, which would have been a parallel development for what we see in the Hebrew texts).

While this kind of speculation might find a parallel in the development of the god Baal in Egyptian mythology (as discussed in section 6.5), which saw the development of the hero Baal-Seth into a villain through an association with the serpent Apep, its highly speculative nature must be stressed. But if in Egypt Baal appeared to have developed into monstrous Yamm, Maclaurin suggests that for the Hebrews, Yamm essentially became Baal as the hero-god Yahweh. While the main problem with this kind of speculation is the lack of corroborative evidence, it also begs the question of why the landlocked Hebrews would have chosen ‘the sea’ as their god, be it as it may that Yamm cannot be described as a sea god, *per se*.

sentence – possibly an answer to El from *ilt*. But, as argued previously, reading the name of Yamm into the text of the column is also far from certain.

While coronation is the most favoured explanation for col. IV of KTU 1.1, Belnap discussed three different interpretations:

- 1) Baal's inauguration to kingship.
- 2) The assigning of boons by El to different deities, whence Yamm is given suzerainty and Baal a house. Baal then gives his property to Yamm (for reasons that Belnap does not elaborate on), interpreting this "shuffling of properties" as having come about "with a change in the social hierarchy".
- 3) Baal being instrumental in establishing Yamm's suzerainty as "mediator and maintainer of order".

Belnap himself favoured the second explanation, which according to him "does not necessarily mean that Baal is dropping lower, but merely that Yamm is advancing and therefore deserves something from all involved".¹⁰⁴⁵ My interpretation of the text is that it presents a scene of royal adoption, which owes influence to the system of political adoption in the Amorite kingdoms, discussed in the subsequent section.

Belnap discussed the passage from KTU 1.1 IV, which he called El's "endorsement" of Yamm as king, in the context of ANE feasts. According to him, the feast – used in the ANE as a symbolic legitimization of asymmetrical social power and institutionalized relations – is where the acceptance of Baal's kingship is enacted. In his reading of the epic, the entire myth revolves around three feasts: the feast arranged by El for Yamm, Baal's feast upon his defeat of Yamm, and Baal's feast following the completion of his palace.¹⁰⁴⁶ In Belnap's assessment, the text of column IV has two primary scenes: l. 9–11 feature Yamm providing sustenance and 12–32 feature "proclamations" followed by a feast provided by El for Yamm's benefit. Belnap also favours the interpretation of El bestowing the designation "Beloved" on Yamm.¹⁰⁴⁷

The term 'Beloved' is also discussed by Smith, according to whom the title "may more precisely denote El's legal selection of Yamm over the other gods in his family".¹⁰⁴⁸ I agree with Smith's assessment of the legal aspect of El's election of Yamm. But I think he makes too much out of the familiar relationship between

¹⁰⁴⁵ Belnap 2011, 47.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Belnap 2011, 46. "These meals lead to other meal events that move the narrative along".

¹⁰⁴⁷ Belnap 2011, 47, 53.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Smith 2001a, 34.

El and Yamm in order to cement the outsider status of Baal and to advance his theory of Baal as an outsider from the Ugaritic pantheon.¹⁰⁴⁹ There does not seem to be enough in the Ugaritic texts to establish El as the ‘biological’¹⁰⁵⁰ father or birth-father of either divinity, as opposed to his role as the social and legal parent (i.e. the physical progenitor of these gods as opposed to their adopter).¹⁰⁵¹ I discuss the epithet more in the following chapter.

We should not conflate the issues of the integration of Baal into the Ugaritic pantheon advanced by Smith, if indeed we are to accept the proposition that the character of the Baal in the Baal Cycle does not simply represent a localized divinity (i.e. the monarchic divinity of the city in which the text was composed and used), and the social function of monarchic adoption (discussed next). The king, and by extension the king of the gods, *needed* to be adopted for the purpose of the legitimation of his monarchic authority, regardless of their factual pedigrees.¹⁰⁵² Because it was through the election – ie. adoption – of a senior monarch that a king was made, whether a king of the gods or of mortals. While I agree wholeheartedly with Pitard’s assessment of the narrative as a succession story set on the mythological plane, I do not think that the story merely

¹⁰⁴⁹ See e.g. Smith 2002b, 2003a. Smith discussed the pantheons in the context of familial relations in multiple articles. In 2002a, 24, he writes: “the strongest form of social identity at Ugarit was the family, and therefore it stands to reason that the polytheistic family first and foremost may have provided the most “natural” expression of the singleness or coherence of divinity. In early Israel, a similar family structure long obtained, probably through the period of monarchy. [...] However, by the seventh century the lineage system of the family had perhaps eroded, thanks to a variety of factors, including the deleterious effects of royal power on traditional patriarchal authority, the purchase of family lands by a growing upper class, and later the effects of warfare on the countryside. This process culminated in the Exilic period, with the loss of land that would diminish the traditional strength of family and inheritance”. This statement follows multiple pages of admonitions against making such categorical dichotomies between ancient Ugarit and Israel.

While it is possible that the Neo-Assyrian Empire wrought some social changes in the area of Palestine during the period, one would be hard-pressed to demonstrate a concurrent ideological change in “the traditional family structure”. On p. 26 Smith continues, “A culture with a diminished lineage system, one less embedded in traditional family patrimonies owing to societal changes in the eighth through sixth centuries, might be more predisposed both to hold to individual human accountability for behaviour and to see an individual deity accountable for the cosmos [...] Accordingly, later Israelite monotheism was denuded of the divine family, perhaps reflecting Israel’s weakening family lineages and patrimonies”. Such assertions must be viewed in the context of Smith’s insistence on dating the birth of Israelite monotheism to this period, resulting from some manner of internal ideological rebellion against the pressures of Empire. The validation of such hypotheses would, in my opinion, require an analogous development in another subject of Empire (and in the best case, in another subject of the same empire) lest we fall back on the special nature of ancient Israel. Such examples, however, are not known to the author.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The term is non-sensical in the context of the familial relationships of the gods.

¹⁰⁵¹ For structural analysis of the familial relationships of the gods, see A. W. Johnson & D. Price-Williams, *Oedipus Ubiquitous: The Family Complex in World Folk Literature* (1996).

¹⁰⁵² De Moor 1990, 78, already emphasized that Baal could only be understood as El’s son-in-law.

concerns the succession of Baal.¹⁰⁵³ I would argue that it reflects real-world political hierarchies and concerns – although in more symbolic fashion than did Smith and Wyatt.

According to Sasson, kinship terminology (vertical relationships with father and son, lateral relationships with brother and older brother) was commonly used as a metaphor for political allegiance in the OB diplomatic circles. He suggested that the familiar terminology “must have been crystal clear to the people of the time; but it could be confusing to us, leading us to reconstruct false relationships, whether we take the vocabulary to be about kinship or power. In fact, the circumstances under which one was permitted to call another ‘brother’ rather than ‘father’ were controlled by an elaborate protocol--”. This protocol was a “deadly serious matter”. To find kinship terms in these texts is not to suggest actual genealogical relationships between the actors, but relationships of power – which were not always voluntary.¹⁰⁵⁴ Furthermore, what determined seniority between the Amorite kings was not always obvious.¹⁰⁵⁵ The full gamut of the Amorite political organization still awaits systematization. The same surely holds true of the mythological texts in which the same vocabulary is used.

Note also that the words ‘son’ and ‘father’, also found in the passage of KTU 1.1. IV, were used as political terms in the Amorite system of vassalage in the OB period.¹⁰⁵⁶ Zimri-Lim calls himself the son of Yarim-Lim, but when Yarim-Lim’s son Hammurapi took the throne, he in turn called Zimri-Lim his father, indicating the ready acceptance of the new king. In the text A.1153, Zimri-Lim quotes a letter he has received from Yarim-Lim: “As to Zimri-Lim, I myself have set him on his throne. I want to do what strengthens him and what secures the foundation of his throne”. Later on in the letter (l. 23), Zimri-Lim has a reply to the same line, a confirmation of the affirmation of Yarim-Lim: “It is *my father*, who brought me to my throne, who will strengthen me and will secure the foundation of my throne”. Because this is an inversion of the first statement, the father of the statement obviously refers to Yarim-Lim, not to Zimri-Lim’s biological father.

¹⁰⁵³ Pitard 2013, 202.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Sasson 1998, 462; 2001, 329; 2013, 121; 2014, 675.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Sasson 2001, 329. In 2001, 333, he seems to describe a situation during which the vassal of Mari, whose king was sponsored by Yamhad, sponsored a king on the throne of Apum; this is witnessed by ARM 25:625.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Sasson 1998, 457: “Vassals, petitioners, or recently enthroned rulers politely called themselves “sons” or more senior rulers and might even give them credit for their own rise, whether deserved or not”.

There is a Mari diplomatic text that is especially relevant to the scene of royal adoption, as it uses language very similar to the scene in the Ugaritic and the later Biblical passages. In ARM 26:537, Yatar-Ami writes to Zimri-Lim: “My father Aplahanda has not died; he still lives. Zimri-Lim *is my father* and Yatar-Ami *is truly your son*. Hold him in *your hand* and in order for him not to feel that his father has indeed died, speak candidly with him”. In addition to this written verbal confirmation, the suzerain would send the prospective vassal or junior king gifts, including garments, chariots, canopies, and thrones, and the vassal would acknowledge the power relationship by wearing the garments and sitting on the throne.¹⁰⁵⁷ Vassals also had to complete visits to the capitals and shrines of their suzerains to obtain their charter as kings, to renew their oaths, to offer tribute and pay their *nebehum*-fees. Zimri-Lim himself paid respect to his father-in-law Yarim-Lim with a visit.¹⁰⁵⁸

Although Baal is called Dagan’s son (*bn dgn*) and Dagan and El have sometimes (although not conclusively) been associated with one another,¹⁰⁵⁹ Baal should not be thought of as El’s *natural* son.¹⁰⁶⁰ The logic of the genealogies of the gods does not necessarily find correspondences in the genealogies of men.¹⁰⁶¹ The vocabulary of familial ties is important with regard to the Amorite system of monarchic adoption and the sponsorship of junior kings. The sharing of a filial bond was not enough to establish one as legitimate ruler; the crucial aspect was election by the monarchic divinity, this mythological concept drawing heavily from the social system of sponsored kingship practised among the Amorites in the Amorite kingdom period.¹⁰⁶² As Baal was (ultimately) elected by El, so the ancient NWS king was in turn elected by the Storm-God.¹⁰⁶³ The pronouncing of the name found in the passage was an important part of this divine election, featured in the inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian monarchs (e.g. RIMA 3 A.0.102.5

¹⁰⁵⁷ Sasson 2013, 121; 2014, 676.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Sasson 2013, 120, 126. Visits did not occur between kings of equal standing.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Contra Day 2000, 98, according to whom El and Dagan can be found nowhere in poetic parallelism.

¹⁰⁶⁰ The question of the filiation of Baal was discussed by Niehr 1994, according to whom the association of both gods with the Hurrian Kumarbi is behind their association with Baal. The topic has been discussed most recently by Ayali-Darshan 2013, who ascribes to the god the kind of double paternity familiar from Indo-European mythology.

¹⁰⁶¹ For example, Campbell (2013) argued convincingly that Kumarbi was the masculine mother of the storm-god Teshub in Hittite mythology.

¹⁰⁶² Sasson (2014, 675–676) in fact pointed out that dynastic succession in the Amorite kingdoms was not “always dependent on DNA matches”.

¹⁰⁶³ The Neo-Assyrian rulers likewise seem to have been elected by the monarchic divinity. In A.0.102.1:11–13, Shalmaneser III describes Aššur as having chosen him “in his steadfast heart and with his holy eyes”.

ii 2/, where Shalmaneser III is *called by name* by Aššur to [the shepherdship] of the people and crowned by him with the exalted crown). The political system of the Amorites has been studied in detail by Sasson (1998).

The formula of the adoption scene “I am your father and you are my son” is played out in diplomatic correspondence, meaning that the scene of the Baal Cycle reflected this real-world practice of royal ‘adoption’ among the Amorite kings. At the same time, this practice sought its legitimation in the Storm-God’s adoption of the monarch. Later in the reign of Hammurapi of Yamhad, Hammurapi and Zimri-Lim call each other brothers, whereas kings that called Zimri-Lim ‘father’ included Bunu-Ištar of Kurda,¹⁰⁶⁴ Hatnu-Rapi of Qattara, Šarrum-kima-kalima of Razama, Ibal-Addu of Ašlakka, and Zimriya of Zurra, among others.¹⁰⁶⁵ The text A.3194 also mentions Yawi-Ila of Talhayum as having been set up as king by Zimri-Lim, explicating the sponsorship. A shift back to calling another king ‘father’ instead of ‘brother’ could happen in times of war, when one king needed to petition another for troops.¹⁰⁶⁶ Asqur-Addu of Karana admits that his ‘father’ Zimri-Lim sent his ambassador to affirm the foundation of his throne and to stabilize his land in ARM 26:411.

In the text ARM 28:166, the newly appointed king of Kurda, Hammurapi, accepts the symbols of vassalage sent to him by Zimri-Lim, which included a throne, garments, and a gift; he became a king through this act of acceptance of the symbols.¹⁰⁶⁷ Hammurapi also calls Zimri-Lim his father in ARM 27:71 and himself the son of Zimri-Lim in ARM 28:166. Likewise, the king of Ašlakka calls himself the son of Zimri-Lim in FM 6 8. The letter ARM 26:537 contains an inversion of the adoption formula, as it was sent by the newly enthroned king: ‘Zimri-Lim is my father and I am his son’, which suggests that the response from Zimri-Lim to Yatar-Ami’s petition, should it have been favourable to the sponsorship of the younger king’s kingship, would have been along the lines of ‘I am the father of Yatar-ami and he is my son’. The text which would have been sent to Aplahanda is not extant, however. But these letters indicate that the royal adoption scene was based on the practice of symbolic political adoption, through which the patronage of established kings aided the establishment of more junior

¹⁰⁶⁴ During the time of Yahdun-Lim the kings of Kurda and Mari were ‘brothers’. Sasson 2013, 120.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Sasson 2014, 680, based on the text LAPO 17:545.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Sasson 1998, 457. Sasson (2013, 121) mentions Simah-ilane of Kurda referring to Zimri-Lim as ‘brother’ at one time and ‘father’ at another.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Sasson 2013, 122.

kings. The Ugaritic scene used this existing political vocabulary to establish a power relationship between two divinities, whether El and Yamm or El and Baal.

There is also an indication already in the Mari letters that the Addu of Aleppo was seen as the adoptive father of the king, and indeed it may have been through his weapons that this patronage was transmitted to new monarchs. In A.1121¹⁰⁶⁸ 46–50, Adad reminds the king, through the word of the prophet, that he raised the king on his thigh or in his armpit (using terminology from real-world social adoption), and that he was the one to restore him to his ancestral throne. Particularly noteworthy about this text is that Adad also promises to the king “the land from the east to the west”, a phrase repeated in royal inscriptions (see section 6.4.2), so long as the king heeds his words and, importantly, renders the god’s judgements for him.¹⁰⁶⁹ Based on the terminology, it seems that this system of patronage is what the text of the Baal Cycle references.

Ashtar’s jibe at character X not having a wife in KTU 1.2 II 22 has usually been interpreted as being directed toward Yamm. I would also like to entertain the possibility that it refers to El himself, having no natural progeny (at least not until or in the “Birth of the Gracious Gods” (KTU 1.23), a completely separate and unrelated text) and needing to choose his successor from three contenders (Baal, Yamm, and Ashtar).¹⁰⁷⁰ My translation of the lines differs from Smith’s, as I have interpreted them as Shapshu announcing to Ashtar the decree of El, and then El himself directly giving the same decree to Ashtar (1.2. II 16 *tr.il.abk* “Bull El, your father (will)...”, II 21 *tr.ilabh* “Bull El, his father (does)...”), to which Ashtar then responds, the text containing direct speech and a paraphrase of the same speech. I also interpret the obscure word *tir* as cognate to Hebrew תִּיר in the sense of “sing the praises of”, indicating El’s choosing of Prince Sea instead of Ashtar here. This would explain El’s excitement at the arrival of Asherah further on in the text (note also that the latter refers to El as “my father”, and El refers to Asherah’s progeny as “your sons”), as well as Kothar’s possible albeit enigmatic byname, *bn ym* “son of the sea” in KTU 1.4 VII 15–16.¹⁰⁷¹

In Wyatt’s interpretation of the lines of KTU 1.1. IV, El places his hands on top of Yamm’s head in order to give blessing to his kingship. While we know

¹⁰⁶⁸ Published by G. Dossin apud A. Lods 1950, 103–107.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Sasson (1994, 316) suggests that this is the prophet, formerly based in Mari but now stationed at Yamhad, manipulating “the demand for social justice that Addu of Halab has made of Zimri-Lim”.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Note also the discussion on El’s impotency in Lewis 1997, 206.

¹⁰⁷¹ It is possible that the epithet ‘son of the sea’ was merely meant to mark him as an islander.

very little of the ceremonial proceedings of Ugaritic coronation, such an act is not impossible to imagine. Wyatt further proposes that the antiphonic nature of l. 16 suggests that the text may have been intended for actual liturgical use. The blessing of the chosen king by placing hands on his head may have been modelled on an existing NWS tradition.¹⁰⁷² While it is not out of the question that scenes of election or coronation or royal feasting in the narrative were been modelled on an existing practice, I agree with Loretz that the text is too fragmentary to draw any such conclusions.¹⁰⁷³

Biblical Witnesses Pertaining to Royal Adoption

The most relevant Biblical texts with regard to the tradition of royal adoption are Psalms 2 and 89, which I have already discussed briefly in connection with the divine weapon. The text of Ps. 2, a royal psalm, has also been connected to Egyptian royal ideology by Granerød (2010), according to whom it can be used to argue that the king was physically procreated by the god.¹⁰⁷⁴ The interpretation of the psalm in the context of royal adoption was first made by Von Rad in 1947.¹⁰⁷⁵ Akin to the Ugaritic text of KTU 1.1. IV, Ps. 2 has also traditionally been connected with a coronation ritual or the annual re-establishing of the same.¹⁰⁷⁶ In fact, according to Granerød: “In Biblical scholarship, Psalm 2 is often considered as one of the indispensable sources for the reconstruction of the idea of kingship – and perhaps divine kingship for that matter – in ancient Israel”¹⁰⁷⁷. This is a sentiment I wholeheartedly agree with. Granerød linked Ps. 2 to 2 Sam. 7 and the prophetic texts. He also named 2 Sam. 7 and Ps. 89 as the main Biblical witnesses to what he called the king’s “divine sonship”,¹⁰⁷⁸ to which Hos. 11:1 and 1 Chr. 17:13, 22:10, 28:6 may be added.¹⁰⁷⁹

¹⁰⁷² Wyatt 2005a, 17–20.

¹⁰⁷³ Loretz 1990, 88.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Granerød (2010, 326) calls it a “forgotten reference to divine procreation”. In his conclusion (p. 334), however, he admits that the psalm text is dealing with a “metaphorical usage of the possible procreative terminology”.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Von Rad 1947.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Granerød (2010, 324) discussed the psalm in the context of liturgy used in connection with the coronation of the king of Jerusalem or an anniversary celebration of the same. Craigie (1983, 64) connected the psalm with a festival of coronation or enthronement.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Granerød 2010, 323.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Granerød 2010, 323.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Granerød 2010, 323. Usue (2007) names Gen. 6:1–9 as a further example, and on p. 89 he

I have suggested that the text of KTU 1.1 IV should be read in the context of the god's royal adoption of the king. According to Pitard, the function of the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle was legitimization of the process of royal succession,¹⁰⁸⁰ and this is exactly the function that I ultimately propose for all texts pertaining to the tradition. The difference between royal adoption and "divine sonship" is born out of the fact that the Egyptian pharaoh was actually believed to be the son of the divinity, whereas the Semitic king was not of divine birth. It seems likely that we are dealing with a ritual text that could have been used in a variety of contexts, as attempts to connect the psalm with any particular Judahite monarch have failed. And indeed, if the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm is to be found in a coronation festival, then it would naturally have been employed by various monarchs.¹⁰⁸¹ 2 Sam. 7 seems to likewise describe David as the elected son of Yahweh, referring to a type of royal adoption.¹⁰⁸² In fact, Sasson likens David's life to the lives of the Amorite kings.¹⁰⁸³ Although Ps. 2 is often seen in the context of Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda,¹⁰⁸⁴ this does not preclude the existence of elements from an earlier tradition in the psalm – or indeed in the Neo-Assyrian traditions which may have ultimately transmitted those elements to the area of Palestine.

However, the concept of divine kingship (the king embodying a divinity rather than merely partaking of some aspect of the divinity – or following my own understanding of ancient NWS kingship, playing the role of the divinity in the cult while enjoying some degree of divine protection as a result of this relationship of iconic representation) is somewhat problematic in the Israelite context. It is a subtle but important distinction whether the king was understood as the divinity's son and a god himself, as he was in Egypt (the pharaoh's *k3*, one of the five souls in the ancient Egyptian conception of man, was believed to be of god, a divine essence in a mortal body), or his adopted son. It is the latter case that we seem to find in the NWS texts. Egyptian royal ideology was well known in Ugarit, as witnessed by textual, iconographic and material evidence (see section 6.5 for

outlines some parallels and differences between it and Ps. 2.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Pitard 2013, 205.

¹⁰⁸¹ Anderson 1972, 64. Usue (2007, 88) claims that it is the "universal authority" of the king that precludes the attachment of the psalm to any historical king. Textual dominance posturing is to be expected in the genre, however. The Amorite kings ruled with the authority of the Storm-God, so to present oneself as invincible was a natural result of this divine favour.

¹⁰⁸² Granerød 2010, 335.

¹⁰⁸³ Sasson 2013, 123.

¹⁰⁸⁴ See Miller II 2013, 214, for discussion.

discussion). Should Ps. 2 contain Egyptian influence, it certainly does not preclude the sharing of motifs in the psalm and the Ugaritic Baal epic, or between the two and the text of Ptah's Decree to Ramesses discussed by Granerød.¹⁰⁸⁵

Granerød dated the psalm, "or at least the motifs we find at the core" of it to the period of the Israelite monarchy "despite the presence of some aramaisms",¹⁰⁸⁶ but I do not find it necessary to force the psalm or the motifs therein into any particular timeframe. The motifs could indeed have been adopted into the Israelite context as well as the Egyptian context at multiple reference points. In fact, the Egyptian text which Granerød compares with Ps. 2 is either from the reign of Ramesses II or III, during which there was heavy NWS influence flowing into Egypt. This makes Granerød's claim that the 15–14th-century BCE *Myth of the Procreation and Birth of the King*, which he claimed is the "most condensed presentation of Egyptian royal ideology",¹⁰⁸⁷ as a true representative of native Egyptian ideology somewhat problematic. The fact that the ideology is attested in Ugarit does not preclude its Egyptian origins, but the Amorite origin of the king's divine adoption seems to suggest an Asiatic borrowing into Egyptian ideology – and this, naturally, does not preclude the borrowing of the motif in the Biblical text from Egyptian sources.

The main point of connection between Ps. 2 (in v. 2:6) and the Egyptian text he found in the word נָסַךְ, the literal meaning of which has to do with pouring liquid. But even on the level of vocabulary, the psalm shares much more affinity with the Ugaritic text; while the verbal root is not found in the fragmentary KTU 1.1 IV, it would fit well with the subsequent banquet scene. Banquet scenes were narratively often found in connection with coronations.¹⁰⁸⁸ Frayne also connected banquet scenes with "chaos monsters", especially in Hittite art, suggesting that the

¹⁰⁸⁵ Granerød 2010. See also Hossfeld & Zenger 1993, who have suggested that Ps. 2 contains not only Egyptian influence, but also the influence of Hellenistic and Neo-Assyrian royal ideology and propaganda. While this may be the case, in my opinion the background of all of these traditions is in the originally Amorite mythological conceptions either adopted by Sargon, or otherwise woven into the later Sargon narratives discussed in this dissertation; therefore to find them dispersed all over the ANE is hardly surprising. In fact, the Aššurbanipal oracle which Ringgren (1983) compared to Ps. 2, which does seem to contain many points of affinity with the psalm, also bears similarity both to the Ugaritic adoption scene of KTU 1.1. IV and the Mari letter FM 7 38, promising to Zimri-Lim the weapons of the Storm-God. To answer the question posed by Granerød regarding which direction in the ANE one should look "in order to find relevant parallels", I would suggest 'backwards'.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Granerød 2010, 323–324.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Granerød 2010, 326.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Sasson 2005, 227–228.

banquet motif marks a celebration following the defeat of monsters.¹⁰⁸⁹ Note, however, the parallelism between the Ps. 2:6 mention of צִיּוֹן הָר־הַקֹּדֶשׁ and [mr]ym *spn* on l. 1. The idea of begetting is shared by the psalm and the Egyptian *Decree or Blessing upon Ramesses* and is absent from the Ugaritic text. But whereas *Decree* 263:5 states “I am your father who begot you among the gods”,¹⁰⁹⁰ the psalm states “You are my son, *on this day* I have begotten you”. It is the immediacy of the begetting (which therefore cannot refer to actual physical begetting, as Granerød admits)¹⁰⁹¹ and the proclamation of the recipient as son in the Hebrew text that is reminiscent of an adoption formula.¹⁰⁹²

The same royal adoption scene discussed in connection with Ps. 2 can also be detected in Ps. 89. The difference between the two is in that in Ps. 89:28, the king calls Yahweh “my father”, where as in Ps. 2:7 Yahweh says to the king “my son”. However, in the Ugaritic texts we can also find a reversal or inversion of the formula, which is additionally a feature of Amorite correspondence,¹⁰⁹³ meaning that both formulations would have existed naturally side by side, in antiphonic response to one another.

לך זרוע עם-גבורה	Yours is an <i>arm</i> with might,
תעז יָדך תרום ימינך	Your <i>hand</i> is strong, your right hand raised.
מָצָאתִי דָוִד עַבְדִּי	I have found David/the <i>Beloved</i> , my servant;
מִשְׁחָתִיו בְּשֶׁמֶן קֹדֶשׁ	with my holy oil have I anointed him;
אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִכּוֹן עִמּוֹ	With whom my <i>hand</i> [=weapon] shall be established;
אֶרְ-יָרְוֶנִי תִאֲמַצְנִי	My <i>arm</i> also shall strengthen him.
לֹא יִשָּׂא אֹיֵב בּוֹ	The enemy shall not exact from him;
וּבֶן-עֲוֹלָה לֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ	nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Frayne 2013, 95–96. I must admit that I cannot fully follow Frayne’s argumentation. It seems that there are too many pieces that he uncritically attempts to attach to the mythic constellation.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Kitchen 1996, 102. *Decree* 263:5–13: “I am your father who begot you among the gods, all of your body being from the gods. I assumed my form as the Ram, Lord of Mendes, and I poured you in your august mother, to make you into (my) champion, and you, indeed, shall perform benefactions for my K3-spirit. I fashioned you as when R^f shines forth, and I have exalted you before the gods, O, King of Upper and Lower Egypt!”

¹⁰⁹¹ Granerød 2010, 335. The idea of begetting the adult king on the day of the proclamation is non-sensical if taken literally. Perhaps in this context an original ‘the sea’ might be suggested (הַיָּם for הַיּוֹם), because whether the recipient of the proclamation or its symbolic backdrop, the sea was somehow involved in the scene in these other traditions. To enter the realm of heavy speculation, should the line in the tradition from which the psalm text has adapted the text have read אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְחָדִיךְ instead of אֲנִי הַיּוֹם אֲבַדְתִּיךְ, it would make more sense against the backdrop of the use of the Combat Myth in the legitimation of kinship and in these scenes of the king’s initiation. As the text stands now, it is clearly a word-play of some kind, unless interpreted metaphorically that the king is reborn on the day he becomes the god’s elected.

¹⁰⁹² On adoption in the ANE, see Donner 1994, in which he actually mentions it as a facet of Davidic royal ideology.

¹⁰⁹³ Compare KTU 1.1 IV 12 with the inversion in 1.3 V 35–36. In the Amorite letters, the senior king establishes himself as the father of the junior king and calls him his son, to which the junior king responds by acknowledging the senior king as his father and proclaiming himself as his son.

וּכְתוּתִי מִפְּנֵי צָרָיו	And I will beat to pieces his adversaries before him,
וּמִשְׂנְאָיו אֶגְדֹּר	and smite them that hate him.
וְאַמּוּנָתִי וְחַסְדִּי עִמּוֹ	But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him;
וּבִשְׁמִי תִרְוַם קַרְנוֹ	and through my name shall <i>his horn</i> be exalted.

וְשִׁמְתִי בְיָם יָדִי	I will set his <i>hand</i> [= weapon] also on <i>the Sea</i> ,
וּבְנְהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ	and his right hand on <i>the Rivers</i> .

הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי	He shall call unto me:
אַבִּי אֶתֶּה	“ <i>You are my father</i> ,
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְשׁוֹעֲתִי	My god, and the rock of my salvation!”

אֶרְאֶנִּי בְּכֹר	Also I will appoint him first-born,
אֶתְגַּדֵּהוּ עֲלֵיּוֹן לְמַלְכֵי־אָרֶץ	the highest of <i>the kings</i> of the earth.

Although Scurlock suggested that the context of Ps. 74 and 89 is the fall of Assyria which included the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians,¹⁰⁹⁴ in Psalm 89: 14, 21–28, we find many points of connection with KTU 1.1 IV 13–25. Verse 20 has been seen as a break in the structure of the psalm, understood as a composite, with the two (or more) portions representing “widely different” dates.¹⁰⁹⁵ Mitchell discussed vv. 6–19 in the context of Yahweh’s victory over the sea and Rahab, and vv. 20–38 in the context of “the choice and exaltation of David”. I discuss verses. 89:10–11, which feature the names of monstrous beings connected to the myth, in section 5.1.4; the themes are different, although they do witness to the use of the mythic constellation in connection with this scene of royal adoption, and hence they are connected to kingship.

I do not think that the themes of kingship and monster battle are so irreconcilable that they demand separate sources, as both can be found together in the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle. Despite many commentators viewing the psalm as having originally been composed of three separate psalms, views of thematic unity and integrity have also been proposed. Mitchell suggested that v. 26 may have been an oblique reference to v. 10, identifying the king’s close relationship with Yahweh, with the king partaking of the strength and power of the divinity’s hand.¹⁰⁹⁶ Whether vv. 10–11 and 21–26 (the passages which I have discussed in this dissertation) were originally derived from separate sources or merely consist of portions of a single composition ultimately has little bearing on the scope of the themes therein.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Scurlock 2013b, 268.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Mitchell 2005, 513, 515. It is noteworthy that the first part of the psalm contains much of the same vocabulary, although in a more unstructured fashion, as though there were two traditions of the same text in the psalm.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Mitchell 2005, 521.

Ps. 89 is also one of the most discussed psalms with regard to the Qumran texts, and it has been proposed that the text 4QPs89 contains a different version of the psalm.¹⁰⁹⁷ According to Mitchell, the Qumran version of the psalm puts much more emphasis than the Masoretic version on Yahweh's covenant with David, on the one hand, and on Yahweh's mighty arm strengthening the arm of his chosen one, on the other. The composition of the Qumran fragment is significantly different. The portion in vv. 21–26 of the Masoretic psalm is actually at the beginning of the fragment, v. 24–25 are missing completely, and v. 26 seems to have been placed between v. 22–23.¹⁰⁹⁸ Verse 29 is also missing from the Qumran version, giving credence to the suggestion that v. 28 is the end of the portion. This arrangement bears uncanny similarity to the Ugaritic royal adoption scene. The Qumran version of the passage, although now in a fragmentary state, would have read:

I have found *David*, my servant;
 With my *holy oil* have I anointed him /
 With whom *my hand* shall be established;
 My arm also shall strengthen him /
 I will set his hand also *on the sea*,
 And his right hand *on the rivers* /
 The enemy shall not exact from him;
 Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.¹⁰⁹⁹

Mitchell interpreted the “different ordering” of the verses as having resulted from the bringing together of the references to the hand upon the sea.¹¹⁰⁰ However, in light of the Ugaritic passage, this ordering seems to match the older text, suggesting that v. 24–25 should be considered as a later insertion, or an insertion from another context.

What makes verse 89:26 interesting is not only the fact that the verb שים is connected with the setting up of a king (e.g. Dt. 17:14: “I will set a king over me...”).¹¹⁰¹ While no direct references to the use of a weapon have been found in the remnants of the Combat Myth in the Biblical text, it has been suggested that

¹⁰⁹⁷ See Mitchell 2005, 511, for literature.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Mitchell 2005, 512, 520.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Mitchell (2005, 520) restored lines 3–5 of the fragment: “His hand shall establish you, and will strengthen you, and I will set his hand on the sea, his right hand on the rivers”.

¹¹⁰⁰ Mitchell 2005, 520.

¹¹⁰¹ Mitchell 2005, 523, writes: “That the psalm has certain royal, monarchical elements is not to be doubted. [...] The royal motifs, if they did originate from a coronation or enthronement psalm, seem to have been so thoroughly reworked and interwoven with other elements as to be inseparable from the rest of the psalm”. I agree with his sentiments, excepting the last, because with the aid of both the Ugaritic royal adoption scene and the Qumran fragment discussed by Mitchell himself, extracting the verses that discuss the king's adoption by the divinity does not seem like an impossible task.

the weapon wielded by Yahweh was none other than his “strong right arm”.¹¹⁰² While this seems almost like a combination of the formulation “strong hand and outstretched arm” found (e.g. in Dt. 4:34), it is the right hand and the word *ṣ* that Wyatt promoted as the weapon. Mitchell discussed the use of the terms hand, right hand, and arm in the psalm in the context of Yahweh’s power over chaos, making mention of the secondary meaning of ‘power’ and the implied meanings of ‘instrument of deliverance and judgement’ in the word *ṣ*. These uses of the word are often found in poetic and prophetic texts, and I do not think that the metaphorical use of the term is coincidental in these contexts.¹¹⁰³ It is therefore tempting to ponder whether the idea of a god setting the symbol of his omnipotence, the symbol of his divine might, on the sea contained an allusion to the Combat Myth. The above verse is even more curious if the subject is interpreted as the king, who appears to be wielding the symbol of divine power – Yahweh’s arm, the divine weapon.

It is interesting to note that Veijola interpreted the psalm in light of ANE social contracts (*Staatsverträge*) or suzerainty treaties, suggesting that Ps. 89 contains an Israelite version of such.¹¹⁰⁴ Certainly the idea of the royal adoption could be interpreted in the context of a social contract, and some of the later Assyrian traditions probably also owe influence to Amorite conceptions, as Šamši-Adad was not the only king of Assyria to make use of them. The Amorite political correspondence could be understood as a proto-state treaty. The psalm has often been interpreted in the context of the ‘selection’ of David,¹¹⁰⁵ but in light of the parallel texts from the ANE, as well as the fact that the king explicitly calls Yahweh “my father” (*אבִי*) in v. 27 and Yahweh calls the king “first-born” (*בְּכוֹר*) in v. 28, an interpretation of the adoption of the monarch by the divinity is not overstating the case. A selection or an election was indeed the desired purpose of this royal adoption.

¹¹⁰² Wyatt 1998, following L’Orange 1953. One must call attention to the 14th century axe-head from Beth-Shean, which is actually in the shape of a hand. See Yadin 1963, 222 (Rockefeller Museum, 36.1662).

¹¹⁰³ Mitchell 2005, 518ff.

¹¹⁰⁴ Veijola 1983. Some of the vocabulary of the scene is shared with the setting of the palace for David in 2 Sam. 7:8–16/1 Chr. 17:4–14, but these passages do not refer to the Combat Myth (if not in fleeting reference to the divinity subduing the king’s enemies for him). It is possible that they cite the formula of royal adoption in the context in order to strengthen the king’s claim to a palace.

¹¹⁰⁵ E.g. Mitchell 2005, 522.

A further point of contact between the psalm and the Ugaritic texts is in KTU 1.101, an Ugaritic hymn celebrating the enthronement of Baal. The text is important with regard to the tradition, as the enthronement of Baal is not actually narrated in the Baal Cycle, only alluded to.

<i>b 'l. yṭb. k ṭbt. ḡr.hd. [[k]]</i>	Baal sits, like <i>a throne</i> is the mountain, Haddu
<i>k mdb. b tk. ḡrh. il špn . b [[ḡ]]</i>	like <i>the flood</i> in the midst of his mountain,
	the divine Saphon
<i>ḡr. tliyt. šb ṭ. brqm [[.ṭ]]</i>	On the mountain of victory: seven <i>lightnings</i> ,
<i>ṭmnt .iṣr r't. 'š brq . y[ry]</i>	eight bundles of <i>thunder</i> , <i>a tree of lightning</i> ;
<i>rišh.tply. ṭly.bn. 'nh</i>	his head is awesome, dew is between his eyes
<i>uz'rt. tml. idh. qrn[m]</i>	enemies have fallen at the base of his (throne),
	<i>the horn</i>
<i>dt. 'lh. rišh. b ḡṭ. b šmm</i>	of his head is exalted at the descent? from heaven
<i>[y]šil. ṭr<m>. iṭ. ph. kṭt. ḡbt. [xx]</i>	?? El, the bull; his mouth is like two clouds
<i>[xxx]ṭmkyn. ddm. lbh [. xxx(x)]</i>	?? like wine is <i>the love</i> of his heart
<i>[xxxxxxxxx]xš . yt. šx[xxxx]</i>	??

In the description of Baal as the king of the gods, we find on l. 6–7 the phrase “his horn is exalted” (*qrn[m] dt 'lh*), resembling תְּרוֹם קַרְנוֹ of v. 25.¹¹⁰⁶ The horns of Baal are also mentioned in KTU 1.3 IV 26 (*yb'r [rkb 'r]pt qrnḥ*), possibly in reference to lightning.¹¹⁰⁷ The word *mlk* does not feature in the text, but *ddm* and *dd* do.¹¹⁰⁸ While the form is followed by *lbh* and probably refers to ‘the love of his heart’, the latter is featured in the construction *tšr . dd ali[yn] b'l*. Usually this is translated “she sang of the loves of Aliyan Baal”, but in the context of Baal’s enthronement, “she sang of the Beloved, Aliyan Baal” ought to be considered. This is one of the few instances where a word in the *dd*-cluster, a related topic discussed in the following chapter, appears in direct conjunction with Baal’s name.

5.1.3 The Beloved as a Royal Epithet¹¹⁰⁹

The term ‘Beloved’, an important facet of the Hebrew and Ugaritic texts, deserves some consideration in this study. Wyatt discussed the Ugaritic epithet *mdd il* in connection with Biblical witnesses.¹¹¹⁰ He suggested that the construction *mdd il*,¹¹¹¹ with the variant *ydd il*¹¹¹² (meaning ‘beloved of El’), may have designated a

¹¹⁰⁶ Wyatt (2002, 389) reconstructs the line *qrn[h] [rm]t 'lh*, which would bring the parallelism to an even sharper focus.

¹¹⁰⁷ Smith & Pitard 2009, 298. The sentence could be translated as “The rider of the clouds flashes his horn(s)”, but there are other alternatives.

¹¹⁰⁸ See section 5.1.3.

¹¹⁰⁹ Portions of this chapter have been published in Töyräänvuori 2015.

¹¹¹⁰ His major contribution to the discussion can be found in Wyatt 1985c.

¹¹¹¹ A possible Biblical parallel appears in Gen. 10:26 (repeated in 1. Chr. 1) in the name of אֱלִיָּאֵל.

title of royal legitimation or a royal epithet. Wyatt correctly submitted that we ought not to look for the *direct* precedent of the Judahite usage from the Ugaritic texts, but this does not mean that the use of the term in the Ugaritic texts cannot help us better understand the meaning and function of the Hebrew term – and vice versa. The background for both of these traditions may be found in the use of the epithet by the Amorite kings in the Amorite Kingdom period.

Wyatt suggested that the Ugaritic epithets have the same formal structure and are cognate, albeit not a direct source, to the Biblical Jedidiah (*ydd yh* as יְדִידְיָהּ in 2. Sam. 12:25, יְדִידָהּ in Neh. 3:10, יְדִיד יְהוָה in Dt. 33:12, יְדִידָת in Ps. 45) and Dodayahu (דֹּדַיָּהוּ).¹¹¹³ One has to wonder whether the מְלָכֵי צָבָאוֹת יִדְּוֹן יִדְּוֹן of Ps. 68:12 also alludes to the same (the text can be translated as “the kings of the armies did flee, did flee”, but as a mocking sing-song, it is possible that the verse subverted existing lyric), as a wealth of other connections to the Ugaritic texts has been discovered in Ps. 68. The word יְדִידָהּ also appears twice in Is. 16:8–10, accompanied by the sea, in a context that recalls the cultic suffering and dying of the king. Note also “יְהוָה בֶּן-בְּזִיד”, the king of Teman in Gen. 36:35, possibly witnessing to the use of the term as an epithet.

Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín connected the Ugaritic word *dd* to the Semitic root *dwd*.¹¹¹⁴ The words *mdd*, *ydd*, *dd*, *ddm*, and *ddym*,¹¹¹⁵ whose meaning all have bearing on the concept of love, form a semantic constellation which I have chosen to call the *dd*-cluster. Words of this cluster find a correspondence in the Hebrew דָּוָד and related words. I have no intention of participating in the discussion on the historicity of the character of David in this dissertation, nor is it my intention to suggest that all Biblical references to the term דָּוָד should have a similar function or logic in terms of their use. With regard to the Ugaritic evidence of the semantic cluster, I have examined chosen passages using the term דָּוָד in light of the Bronze Age textual parallels. But in addition to a semantic relationship, words of this cluster may also have shared cultic-political meaning in both cultures, functioning as a royal cognomen.¹¹¹⁶

¹¹¹² A possible Biblical parallel appears in Num. 34:21 in the name of אֱלִידָד. In the Ugaritic texts, the epithet *ydd.il* refers solely to Mot, according to Vaughn 1993, 423; while it is true that most extant texts indicate this, he uses only the Baal Cycle in his assessment.

¹¹¹³ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 16. Also note יְדִיד יְהוָה (“Beloved of Yahweh”) as an epithet of the tribe of Benjamin. Dt. 33:12. See Rahmouni 2008, 197.

¹¹¹⁴ Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003, 264.

¹¹¹⁵ And arguably *ddn*.

¹¹¹⁶ The assumption of regnal names in NWS societies was first discussed by De Vaux 1958, 165–167.

This cognomen, or alternative name, of David's son Solomon corresponded to, and according to Wyatt was ultimately derived from, the Egyptian construction *mr-r* 'Beloved of Re'.¹¹¹⁷ This was the throne name of Egyptian pharaohs, which in Wyatt's opinion held clear ideological significance.¹¹¹⁸ Wyatt suggested that at least in Egypt, the epithet *mr-DN* came to be used for the assertion or claim of legitimacy, especially after the use of the term became routine by the time of Horemheb.¹¹¹⁹ Wyatt admitted that the construction may have started out as a proper name, but it bears remarking that both *mr-r* and *mr-n-r* had already been used as a throne name (the "*nsw-bity*" name) by Egyptian kings of the 6th dynasty. Later, during the 18th dynasty, it was also popular as a given name even for commoners, and it may even have gained its popularity from its association with kings. Notable among the kings using the epithet was Pepy I, but *mr-n-r* also appeared as the birth name (the "*s3-r*" name) of Nemtyemsaf II,¹¹²⁰ whom Wyatt refers to by Manetho's Grecicized name Mentheshuphis. It is uncertain whether 'king' or 'prince' was meant by the (reconstructed) "*s3 nsw*",¹¹²¹ but in the Abydos King List, *mri.n-r nmti-m-s3.f* would seem to feature as a throne name among throne names. The title *s3-r* 'son of Re', is attested from the 3rd millennium BCE onwards.¹¹²²

Wyatt's claim that none of the examples save that of Nemtyemsaf II use the formula in conjunction with another name in the same cartouche before the time of the New Kingdom is plainly false (as the *s3-r* name of Tety, the first king of the 6th dynasty, in the Sakkara King List (SAK.33) is *tti mr n pth*). Yet this need not mean that the formula "Beloved of DN" was not understood as royal titulary, rather than as a personal name. What remains is that not every king used it, and that the practice seems to have started during the 6th dynasty (c. 25th century BCE). It must be noted that the diminution of the status of kings in favour of the priesthood of the sun-god Re began during the 5th dynasty, leading to the disintegration of the central government during the 6th dynasty,¹¹²³ so the

¹¹¹⁷ One wonders whether the name *מְרִיב בֶּעֶל* (son of Jonathan and grand-son of Saul in 1 Ch. 8:34, 9:40) is connected to this tradition.

¹¹¹⁸ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 16–17.

¹¹¹⁹ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 17.

¹¹²⁰ His full title in the Abydos King List (ABY.39) has been reconstructed as [*s3 nsw*]-*smsw nmti-m-s3.f mri.n-r df3-m-s3.f*.

¹¹²¹ See Ryholt 1997, 59. While it features in his royal titulary, it was "*s3-r*" that was usually used to refer to the king. The term "*s3 nsw*" literally translates "son of the king of Upper Egypt", the word deriving from the emblematic plant of the area.

¹¹²² Granerød 2010, 325.

¹¹²³ See Wright 1988, 144–145.

employment of the title may indeed reflect an assertion of legitimacy. Since the names of the 6th-dynasty pharaohs were known in the Eastern Mediterranean city of Byblos,¹¹²⁴ it does not seem impossible that they may also have been known in Ugarit.

With regard to the possibility that this formulation could have marked the heir apparent, it must be pointed out that in Egypt the title “(eldest) son of king” had undergone a weakening by the time of the 15th dynasty, having resulted in an extended sphere of references. Redford also suggested that the Asiatic Hyksos would have adopted forms they found conveniently at hand during their rule of Egypt.¹¹²⁵ Wyatt saw the Ugaritic royal institution modelled after Egyptian precedents, witnessed for example by the use of the Egyptian *atef*-crown in Ugaritic iconography.¹¹²⁶ Wyatt also suggested that at least in Egypt, the divine name used in the formula reflected the political importance of the city (or perhaps the cult centre) seen as the god’s power base; for example the construction “beloved of Amun” reflected the theological and political interests of Thebes specifically.¹¹²⁷

But Egyptian parallels discussed by Wyatt are not the only evidence to suggest the use of the same type of royal epithets or cognomen in NWS texts. Phoenician texts also suggest that the name Bar-Hadad or Ben-Hadad (i.e. ‘Son of Hadad’, cf. KAI 202, 2 Kgs. 13:3, 24) was used as either the throne name of kings, or the epithet of the crown-prince in Aram-Damascus.¹¹²⁸ It is plausible that the emergent monarchies of Israel and Judah looked to surrounding kingdoms as models of how to fashion their royal titulary. The origins of the title ‘Beloved’ used in the context of kingship seem to be Amorite, however. Based on inscriptional evidence, it can be shown that ‘Beloved of Adad’ (*na-ra-am* ^dIškur) was used as a royal epithet at Aleppo, being found consistently in most of the royal inscriptions from the OB period. It was held by Abba-el (E4.33.4.1, 2), Yarim-Lim II (E4.33.5.1., 2001, 2002), Niqmi-Epuh (E4.33.6.1, 2001), Irkabtum (E4.33.7.1), Yarim-Lim III (E4.33.8.1), and Abba-el II (E4.33.x), whose dynastic

¹¹²⁴ See Wright 1988, 148.

¹¹²⁵ See Redford 1992, 116.

¹¹²⁶ Wyatt 2005a, 20, 32. See also De Moor 1990, 70, who associated the Ugaritic El with the Egyptian Amon-Re.

¹¹²⁷ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 17.

¹¹²⁸ Note 2 Kgs 8:7–15, in which the prophet Elisha prophesizes that Ben Hadad will both recover from his illness and die. This could be read as an oblique reference to dynastic succession: this particular Ben Hadad would die, but a Ben Hadad would nonetheless continue sitting on the throne.

seal was later used by the king of Alalakh, Niqmepa, whose namesake was a king of Ugarit in the 13th century.

It is likely that the tradition was dispersed from Aleppo to the sponsored kingdoms of the Amorite system. Ultimately it lies behind the title of the Biblical David and Jedidiah, which indicates the later use of this Amorite political mythology in Palestine. Note also that the kings of the Ur III dynasty, modelling their kingship on those of Sargon and Naram-Sin, also fashioned themselves as the “Beloved of Enlil” (KI.ÁGA ^dEN-LIL.LÁ).¹¹²⁹ Šamši-Adad likewise fashioned himself the “Beloved of Dagan” (*na-ra-am* ^dda-gan, A.0.39.7) after his conquest of Mari, suggesting that the title may have been in use in that city especially. At this time he was not the king of Mari, but its prince (*ru-ba mar-ri*^{ki}).¹¹³⁰ This would indicate that assuming the title of ‘king’ may have required the sponsorship of a senior king, the king of Yamhad; as Šamši-Adad never received this, he was therefore forced to use alternative styling.

With regard to the Ugaritic example, *mdd il* (‘Beloved of El’) does not correspond well with Baal’s assumed dominance in the city’s pantheon, unless one either assumes that El functioned as the protector of kingship in the city, or that the title is something of a mockery (e.g. El is seen as backing the ‘wrong’ king in the narrative of the Baal Cycle). However, my examination of the adoption scene in KTU 1.1. IV may explain this discrepancy. As “El’s darling”, Yamm could be understood as representing El’s chosen one for kingship, from whom Baal then seizes kingship for himself, legitimating the kingship through his victory. It must also be stated that we do have an example of the names *mddb’l*¹¹³¹ (KTU 4.70:1, 4.85:1), *ydb’l* and *bn ydb’l* (KTU 4.704) from Ugarit, the latter of which may alternatively refer to the “hand of Baal” (i.e. the weapon of the Storm-God).¹¹³² It is possible, however, that this *mddb’l* not a personal name at all. Both times, it appears on the first line of a list of names, following *qrtym*, ‘cities’. It could either be an attribute of the cities (i.e. cities under the command of the king/crown-

¹¹²⁹ BT 4 xii 28.

¹¹³⁰ There was also the title of *rabiān amurrim*, the chieftain of the Amorites, which was used in Larsa and Diniktu. In fact, Yarim-Lim appears to have born the title at Diniktu. Sasson 2014, 690.

¹¹³¹ Gröndahl 1967, 143.

¹¹³² By this I mean to indicate that even though one the chosen as the king of the gods would have born the epithet *mdd il*, the mortal crown-prince of the city may well have born the title *mdd b’l*, Baal being the dynastic god and the patron of the dynasty. The fact that the epithet is not found in texts more frequently may be due to circumlocution, being that this was the cultic name of the bearer.

prince), or a description of either the cities or the names of the persons that follow.

Outside of the narrative texts, the name *ydb'l* is also written on an arrowhead found in the area of Northern Galilee/Southern Lebanon. It seems to belong to a person of some importance, as the arrow-head also mentions his retainer (i.e. the warrior who was dependent on him as a stronger person), “a man of *ydb'l*”, named Elibaal (*'lb'l*), who was in one fashion or another the property of this Yaddabaal.¹¹³³ With regard to the name David, the Ugaritic name *bn ndwd* (KTU 1.704:5, N-stem?) is also of interest. Furthermore, it is important to note the context of the name Jedidiah in the HB: in 2 Sam. 12:24, Jedidiah is the name given to David’s son Solomon by the prophet Nathan, further suggesting that the name ‘Beloved’ may indeed have functioned as the epithet or cognomen of the crown-prince, akin to the name Bar-Hadad of Aram-Damascus.

Lipiński also noted the regnal name assumed by the NWS king of Hamath in the 8th century, which suggests that the assuming of a new name upon enthronement was a widespread and longstanding custom, and that it was prevalent in NWS kingdoms.¹¹³⁴ Lipiński discussed the last king of Hamath, Yau-bi'di, mentioned in the Annals of Sargon II of Assyria, and the possibility that he was of Israelite origin due to Israelite influence in the area during the reign of Jeroboam II in the late 8th century BCE.¹¹³⁵ Regardless of an actual historical presence of Israel at Hamath, it is likely that the cities shared a similar political composition. Hamath, situated on the Orontes, was in the Aleppan cultural sphere and had been under Amorite rule in the time of Mari.¹¹³⁶ While I am not convinced that the term used in NWS kingdoms was necessarily of Egyptian derivation (as there is a textual basis for its Amorite origin), the case for it having been used as a title of royal legitimation is strong. A note should also be made of the term “Beloved of *that place*”, used in the Taanach letter TT 2:4, as a designation of the ruler Ri-Washu, although nowhere in the letter styled as king, he seems to have been the supreme ruler of the city of Taanach during the period of the Egyptian Empire in Asia.¹¹³⁷ This suggests that the construction ‘Beloved of

¹¹³³ Deutch & Heltzer 1995, 26_{xxx}. Heltzer 2003, 525–527. Heltzer believed that information on the arrow heads informs us on the process of the formation of state and society.

¹¹³⁴ Lipiński 1971, 372. Albright (1928, 238) noted that the term appears in masculine form in Amorite (*Yedidah* and *Yadidatum*).

¹¹³⁵ Lipiński 1971.

¹¹³⁶ Lipiński (1971, 372) states that there “can be no doubt that the king of Hamat bore a NWS name, just as the other known kings of Hamat in the eight century B.C.”. According to him, the name of the king means that “God will testify his divine election”.

¹¹³⁷ Sellin 1903, 113–122.

DN' may have referred to the kings of crown-princes of NWS polities.

While such evidence does prove that the construction was in use as a royal epithet or cognomen in Ugarit, as it does not appear on or in connection with the names of the Ugaritic king-list, and therefore we have no proof that it was used as royal titulary. Wyatt admits that the use of the term in Ugarit seems to have been different from the Egyptian and Judahite usage in that it does not exemplify actual royal protocol, but instead is found in the realm of mythology.¹¹³⁸ While this may be true for the Egyptian usage of the term, applying the same reasoning to the Judahite usage is somewhat less certain. It may well be that the Judahite usage of the term is at least partly mythological or theological in nature, and there seems to be little evidence that it was employed in actual royal protocol in Palestine. I am also not certain that all the words in the Ugaritic *dd*-cluster have been so thoroughly researched in this context to definitively state that it was not used in actual protocol in the city. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the construction *mdd il* appears in connection with Yamm in only one of the “versions” of the Baal Cycle, so its interpretation as predominantly mythological may be too hasty.¹¹³⁹ It is possible that the construction was used as a royal title, but there is little to no evidence of such use.

The epithet *mdd il ym* occurs five times in the Ugaritic corpus (on tablets 1.3 and 1.4, and often read into tablet 1.1), while *zbl ym* has eleven occurrences, ten of which are paralleled with *tp̄ nhr*, most of them in tablet 1.2.¹¹⁴⁰ Whether one views 1.2 as separate from the rest of the tablets or not, there is a significance in the use of the epithets, and I find Korpel's argument¹¹⁴¹ that Mot also has two distinct epithets, *ydd il* and *mdd il*, the latter of which is used only once and in a tablet where the first epithet is also used (cf. KTU 1.4 VIII 23 and 31–32), irrelevant with regard to Yamm's epithets, which are not so much ‘distinct’ as completely different. With regard to Korpel's argument, I am willing to hold with “the majority of the Ugaritologists” that all of the tablets of the Baal Cycle were probably written by the hand of Ilumilku the scribe, but I do not see a reason to view them as one continuous narrative when that is not what the texts present us with.¹¹⁴² They are a *cycle of texts*, meaning that the tablets consist of a collection

¹¹³⁸ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 18.

¹¹³⁹ Meier 1986.

¹¹⁴⁰ Rahmouni 2008, 167, 213.

¹¹⁴¹ Korpel 1998, 90.

¹¹⁴² There is a parallel to the process in the modern era in the form of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*.

of more or less loosely connected texts collated under the rubric of “Baal”.¹¹⁴³

Korpel’s argument of Yamm’s loss of the epithets *zbl* and *tp̄t* as a result of his defeat by Baal is also untenable if one holds that the tablets all belong to the same narrative and that the epithet *mdd il ym* appears already in the first tablet. There is also no reason to assume that *mdd il* was an epithet of lesser prestige than *zbl* and *tp̄t* (“epithets describing him as powerful god”), as Korpel’s argument does. There is no internal reason for the switching of the epithets, so the only conclusion we can draw is that they present us with two different textual traditions of the same mythology. Even the divinity responsible for the defeat of the sea is different in tablet 2, as compared with tablets 3 and 4 (Baal and Anat, respectively). Most of the instances of the second, parallel epithet *zbl ym tp̄t nhr* are in the Baal Cycle, but the parallelism of *ym* and *nhr* features also in KTU 1.9 – although the combinations of epithets and appellations in the text are difficult to interpret (e.g. line 17 may feature the combination *mlk nhr*, and line 18 *zbl b’l*, but the ending of both lines is broken off).

The epithets *zbl ym* and *mdd il ym* are nowhere used in conjunction, but seem to represent alternative appellations of the god. Note also that sometimes the word *ym* without appellation does clearly refer to the divinity; e.g. in KTU 1.2 I 28, where *ym* alone parallels *tp̄t nhr*: “the messengers of Yamm, the embassy of Judge River” (*mlak.ym / t’dt tp̄t nhr*). The epithet *zbl ym* does not appear in the first tablet, which only features the partial possible form *mdd i[l ym]*. On the other hand, KTU 1.2, which features the construction *zbl ym*, has no occurrences of the *mdd il* construction. This alternation may suggest that the tablets contain different iterations of Baal and Yamm’s conflict, or feature different versions of the myth. While it is also possible that the change in epithet is somehow significant to the narrative, usually if one of the generic words also employed as the proper name of a divinity (e.g. “the sea”) was used to refer to the divinity, some appellation was attached to it.

The poetry of the *Kalevala* was compiled from oral accounts of Finnish folk poetry, which were edited and redacted by Elias Lönnrot in 1835. While the poems themselves are from the 19th century, and the degree to which they were edited by Lönnrot himself is still debated (see Honko 1990), their metre, form, and vocabulary do seem to contain traces of a much older and orally transmitted body of Finnish literature. Their compilation into a national epic to foster the developing national identity of the Finnish people under the aegis of the Russian empire (and caught between two empires for most its history) may also shed some light on the composition of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.

¹¹⁴³ Contra Smith & Pitard 2009, 7–11, who argue in favour of the text of the cycle as a unified composition.

I do not agree with Burns' assessment that *ydd* and *mdd* are shown to have been “relatively common” titles of Ugaritic divine beings, as the only other god whom he discussed as having had the title in the Ugaritic texts – in addition to Yamm and Mot – is *ar[š]* in KTU 1.3 III 43.¹¹⁴⁴ This is the only instance in the Ugaritic texts where the epithet appears connected to *arš*, and it is quite possible that it here reflects line KTU 1.3 III 38 (*lmḥšt mdd il* to *mḥšt mddil*). In this particular instance, *mddil* may simply follow the *Leitwort*¹¹⁴⁵ or catch-word *mḥšt*¹¹⁴⁶ due to a convention of (originally oral) poetry, paralleling the beginning of the earlier tricolon for the purpose of creating a beating rhythm for the verses enumerating Anat's vanquished foes, and having nothing to do with *arš* specifically. A single mention, as already stated – or a single instance of an epithet – is proof of nothing. Either there was thought and meaning behind the epithet or it was conjured up in error, but as no further evidence exists, we have no way of knowing.

What Burns fails to mention – and what is probably more relevant – is that the god Mot is also given this epithet in KTU 1.4 VIII 23–24 (*mdd ilm mt*).¹¹⁴⁷ This again is the only instance of the epithet in connection with Mot, as his usual epithet is *ydd il ḡzr* (“El's beloved, the hero” or “the beloved god of the hero”),¹¹⁴⁸ which is often parallel to *bn ilm mt* (“son of the gods, Mot” i.e. belonging to the gods = the god of Death, or “son of El, Mot”), e.g. in KTU 1.4 VIII 31–32. It is difficult to interpret the difference in meaning between the active and passive participles of *ydd* and *mdd*,¹¹⁴⁹ but what we can gather from the Ugaritic epics is that *mdd* was mostly associated with *ym* and *ydd* with *mt*. Smith suggested that the use of both *mdd il* and *ydd il* in KTU 1.4 may reflect a seam in the narrative, where the Mot story was joined secondarily with the rest of the Baal Cycle.¹¹⁵⁰ Because *mdd il* appears in the context of Mot only once, a scribal error may account for a likelier explanation. We have no way of knowing what the

¹¹⁴⁴ Burns 1993, 3–4.

¹¹⁴⁵ See Buber 1936 [1994]. According to Buber a *Leitwort* is a meaningful or measured repetition of a word or word root within a text or text complex, issuing from the inner rhythm of the text.

¹¹⁴⁶ The verb is a *Leitwort* according to Smith 2009, 245–246.

¹¹⁴⁷ Wyatt (2005 [1985]) also calls attention to this.

¹¹⁴⁸ Vaughn (1993, 430) also suggests the meaning “Beloved of the warrior El”. El is, however, rarely if ever portrayed as a warrior divinity.

¹¹⁴⁹ On the construing of the terms, see Wyatt 2005 [1985], 18. Wyatt seems to see *ydd* as an adjectival form. The independent category of adjectives is somewhat problematic in Semitic languages, so whether it is to be understood as an adjectival or participial form makes little difference. See Gai 1995. While *mdd* ought to be a participle of the D-stem of the same root *ydd*, Tropper §73.427 lists it as a G-stem passive participle of the *maqṭūl* morpheme type.

¹¹⁵⁰ Smith 1994b, 13.

significance of the epithet *ydd il* was in comparison to the epithet *mdd il*, although it bears pointing out that *ydd il* is a closer correspondent to the Biblical epithet Jedidiah.

Of course, both Yamm and Mot were contenders for the kingship of the gods, so the association of *ydd* and *mt* does not discount either word as a kingship term. Burns' argument – that since so many of the Ugaritic gods are called either sons (*bn il*), daughters (*bt il*) or beloved of El (*mdd il*) and Asherah, these titles cannot be seen as granting primacy¹¹⁵¹ – is irrelevant when examining the title *mdd/ydd* specifically. Nowhere are the two terms connected with Asherah in the Ugaritic texts, and while the terms would seem connected to the idea of kingship, I do not think that they can be seen as *granting primacy* by explicating the love of the divinity for the bearer. In fact, the case may be quite the opposite. I would suggest that *mdd* and *ydd* are indeed epithets in the sense of being names used *in lieu* of other appellations for reasons of superstition regarding the status and role of the crown-prince and the delicate social balance required by the idea of predetermined dynastic succession;¹¹⁵² one could thus identify the bearer as having royal stature without saying as much, for an outright statement was to tempt fate and invite calamity. Sasson pointed out that conflicts of the longest duration and most prolonged consequences in the OB period followed the death of a monarch, even one relatively low on the rung of power, because the political alliances of a king were personal and often undone by the death of the monarch.¹¹⁵³ The term 'Beloved' would have identified the bearer as the pretender without using the word *mlk* (to the effect of '*bn mlk*'), which, as Wyatt has argued, was a title awarded to gods who defeated creatures such as Yamm and Mot.¹¹⁵⁴

A note should also be made of the appropriateness of the translation of *ddm* as 'jar',¹¹⁵⁵ e.g. in the administrative text KTU 4.790, which speaks of the measurement of *dd* administered to horses (*tl̄t.ddm.š'rm.l.ḥmrm / dt.tblm / ḥms.šr.dd.l.ssw.ršp / ḥms.ddm.l. ssw.mlk.aṭrt*, "3 measures of barley for the

¹¹⁵¹ Burns 1993, 4.

¹¹⁵² The naming of the heir, which at once ascertains dynastic succession, also not only highlights the mortality of the reigning monarch, but may also place his life in mortal peril from the pretender. Note that the two other longer literary texts from Ugarit, Keret and Aqhat, both concern failed or aborted dynastic succession. The historical importance of this question may be viewed against the civil wars caused by uncertain dynastic succession among the Assyrian Sargonids. See Nielsen 2012; Pitard 2013.

¹¹⁵³ Sasson 2014, 684.

¹¹⁵⁴ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 17.

¹¹⁵⁵ See Smith & Pitard 2009, 65.

donkeys of the TBLM (Tabalians?), 15 measures for the horses of Resheph (possibly a city akin to Arsuf?), 5 measures for the horses of the king of Ataroth (?).¹¹⁵⁶ I suggest that the term is in fact a measurement of royal standard, analogous to the *lmlk*-seals found on Judahite pottery from the time of Sennacherib, and that the purpose of the text is to record military rations. Nam, for example, interpreted these Judahite seal impressions as reflecting the “growing administrative activities of a centralized government”, and associated them with government property for military provisions.¹¹⁵⁷ The context of *ddm* in this case is that of a measurement, but the concept of measuring was tied to kingship and it was the king’s authority that guaranteed the measurements. Hence the word has the meaning of a unit of measurement, but this meaning is derived from a root tied to kingship. Such an interpretation would allow the term *ddm* to find correspondence with the other words of the *dd*-cluster.

Regarding the Biblical witnesses, Ps. 45 is an interesting case, as the term ‘Beloved’ is found in the title of the psalm (לְיָדִידָת), after which a description of a mortal king (in vv. 3–10) follows the exposition of the Psalmist “addressing his verses to the king”.¹¹⁵⁸ What follows is a love poem reminiscent of Canticles, extolling the virtues of the king and comparing him with the divinity. According to Walton, the psalm functioned as David’s coronation hymn.¹¹⁵⁹ What follows the purported coronation hymn is a hymn describing the queen. The motif of battle as such is not present in the psalm, but mention is made of the weapons, possibly the weapons of the Storm-God, given to the king as a sign of monarchic authority. Present here is the sword (חֶרֶבָה) of the king, as well as the arrows (חֲצִיצִיד) that will pierce of hearts of the king’s enemies; between these is found mention of the hands of the king. The sceptre of the king (שֵׁבֶט מַלְכוּתָהּ) is also mentioned in v. 6, concluding the list of symbols given to the king before admonitions begin; it is reminiscent of the king’s vegetal staff in Phoenician and Syrian iconography.

The passages from 4b–5 advise to “let your right hand teach you

¹¹⁵⁶ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 46, has interpreted the text, along with KTU 1.86 and the syllabic RS 94.2415 as referring to the horses of the divinities Resheph, Milku, and Ashtart. Because many place-names bore the names of divinities (sometimes functioning as the cult centres of their eponymous divinities), it is often impossible to make a distinction between them. The text is an administrative text, regardless. There is a tendency to interpret all ancient texts in light of mythology and their religious significance, which is why I have taken the position of looking for their real world functions first. The distinction may not always have been meaningful to the ancient agent.

¹¹⁵⁷ Nam 2012, 123.

¹¹⁵⁸ דָּבָר טוֹב אֶמַר אֲנִי מֵעַשֵׂי לְמַלְכִּי.

¹¹⁵⁹ Walton 1991, 26.

tremendous things; your arrows are sharp, the peoples fall under you, they sink into the heart of the king's enemies". Every one of the words in v. 5 is known from the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (and indeed bear much similarity to KTU 1.2 IV), but as such they do not explicitly refer to the Combat Myth, even though the sea may be implied in the enemies of the king and the phrase "heart of the sea" may owe influence to royal inscriptions. The poetry of the verse is grammatically difficult, so it is safe to assume that some editing has taken place, perhaps due to no other reason than the older couplet no longer making sense in the context of the final redaction. Furthermore, in verse 6 mention is made of the throne (𐤀𐤍𐤔𐤕), the throne of the king being paralleled with the throne of the divinity. The vocabulary of the psalm is familiar from the Amorite correspondence, but no mention of the sea can be found in the text.

One of the possible uses of the epithet 'Beloved' outside of the names of David and Jedidiah in the HB may be in the Book of Jeremiah. There are several mentions of the sea in Jeremiah, many of which bear semblance to the poetic language found in the Book of Isaiah¹¹⁶⁰ and are in alignment with the topic of the use of 'Beloved' as the epithet of the king. T. H. Meek, writing on the poetry of Jeremiah in 1924, offered a description of the Book which is still relevant today: like the other prophetic books, Jeremiah is an anthology of oracles. And akin to Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah, it is also an anthology of anthologies.¹¹⁶¹ He also argued that, like most ancient anthologies, the oracles of Jeremiah were collected from different time-periods and organized relatively loosely, being often linked together but with the tiniest similarity of motif.¹¹⁶² It is this very aspect of Jeremiah that allows us to examine Jeremiahic units of poetry detached from their immediate contexts and to seek their parallels in other Biblical and ANE literatures. Out of these, Jer. 48:32 is the most striking and deserves closer examination in the context in which it is featured. Because the passage has a connection with Isaiah 16, I have chosen to examine the Isaiahic passages together with the Jeremiahic verses.¹¹⁶³

There is a passage in Jeremiah (48:32–34) which ties into a passage from

¹¹⁶⁰ Water metaphors in Jeremiah have been studied by Holt 2005.

¹¹⁶¹ Meek 1924, 281.

¹¹⁶² Meek 1924, 283.

¹¹⁶³ I have chosen not to engage with the redactional layers of the texts because the question of the dating of the traditions is peripheral to my thesis. Wilson (2014, 136) described Isaiah as a helical and dialectical text which moves back and forth between various timeframes and places, containing both individual and communal concerns.

Proto-Isaiah. Machinist suggested that it was authored by someone informed in actual royal propaganda,¹¹⁶⁴ and this seems relevant with regard to the topic of this dissertation. Both passages, which make mention of the sea, read:

מבכי יעזר אֶבְרָהֶֽקֶלֶךְ הַגֶּזֶר שִׁבְמָה נְטִישׁוֹתֶיךָ עָבְרוּ יָם עַד יָם יַעֲזָר נִגְעוּ עַל־קִיָּצֶךָ וְעַל־בְּצִיָּרֶךָ שֹׁדֵד נָפַל	Jer. 48:32	From the weeping of Jazer I weep for you, vine of Sibmah Your branches <i>crossed the sea</i> , over <i>the sea of Jazer</i> ¹¹⁶⁵ they have struck/reached, upon the summer fruits and on your vintage, <i>devastation</i> has fallen
וְנִאֲסָפָה שִׂמְחָה וְגִיל מִכַּרְמֵל וּמִמַּעַרְץ מוֹאָב וַיִּנּוּ מִיִּקְבֵּים הַשִּׁבְתִּי לֹא־יִדְרֹךְ הַיָּד הַיָּד לֹא הַיָּד	Jer. 48:33	And gathered away are gladness and joy from the orchard (and from the land of Moab), and <i>the wine</i> from the winepresses I have caused it to fail, there is not treading, The <i>Beloved!</i> the <i>Beloved!</i> there is no <i>Beloved!</i>
מִזַּעֲקַת חֶשְׁבּוֹן עַד־אֶלְעֵלָה עַד־יָהֵז נָתְנוּ קוֹלָם מִצֹּר עַד־חֹרֶנַּיִם עֲגָלַת שְׁלֹשָׁה כִּי גַם־מִי נִמְרִים לִמְשֹׁמוֹת	Jer. 48:34	And from the cry of Heshbon to Eleleah and to Jahaz they have given <i>their voices</i> from Zoar unto Horonaim, the three calves / calf of three years for even the water of Nimrim has become a desolation
כִּי שִׁדְמוֹת חֶשְׁבּוֹן אֶמְלֵל גֶּזֶר שִׁבְמָה בַּעֲלֵי גוֹיִם הִלְכוּ שְׂרוּקֶיהָ עַד־יַעֲזָר נִגְעוּ תַעֲזוּ מִדְבָּר שְׁלֹחֹתֶיהָ נִשְׂטְשׁוּ עָבְרוּ יָם	Is. 16:8	For the fields of Hesbon wither, the vine of Sibmah the lords of nations struck down the red fruits, even unto Jazer, they wandered into the desert, her <i>branches</i> were stretched out, they <i>crossed the sea</i>
עַל־כֵּן אֶבְכֶּה בְּכִי יַעֲזָר גֶּזֶר שִׁבְמָה אֶרְוֶה דִּמְעָתִי חֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶלְעֵלָה כִּי עַל־קִיָּצֶךָ וְעַל־בְּצִיָּרֶךָ הַיָּד נָפַל	Is. 16:9	Therefore I weep the weeping of Jazer, the vine of Sibmah, I drink my fill of my tears, Heshbon and Eleleah, for upon your summer fruits and upon your harvest the <i>Beloved</i> is fallen!
וְנִאֲסָפָה שִׂמְחָה וְגִיל מִן־הַכַּרְמֵל וּבְכַרְמִים לֹא־יִרְצָן לֹא יִרְעַע לֹא בְּיִקְבֵּים לֹא־יִדְרֹךְ הַיָּד הַיָּד הַשִּׁבְתִּי	Is. 16:10	And gathered away is gladness and joy from the orchard, ¹¹⁶⁶ and in the vineyards there is no singing, there is no shouting there is be no treading of the <i>wine</i> in the winepresses, the <i>Beloved</i> I have made to cease!

The verse of Jer. 48:32 seems to contain material from both verses in Is. 16:8–9.

The Jeremiahic verse does not merely weave the two Isaiahic verses together. The beginning and end of Jer. 48:32 share material with Is. 16:9, but the middle of Jer. 48:32 shares with and expands on the end of Is. 16:8. The end of Jer. 48:32 has replaced the *הַיָּד נָפַל* with *שֹׁדֵד נָפַל*, which may be due either to textual corruption or purposeful alteration on the part of the author but which witnesses nonetheless to the reading of *הַיָּד* in place of *שֹׁדֵד*.¹¹⁶⁷ There are several words in the verses which seem to allude to places in the vicinity of Hebron, such as Sibmah and Mt. Kirmil or Carmel (כַּרְמֵל for כְּרָמִים). There are also place-names which point to the

¹¹⁶⁴ Machinist 1983, 725.

¹¹⁶⁵ LXX reads “cities of Jazer”, indicating that the *Vorlage* might have read ערים, “cities” for ים, “at the sea”. No lake or “sea of Jazer” is known from antiquity nor is the place name Jazer precisely located, although Khirbet Šar in Jordan was suggested as a possible location already by Gruenhut 1911, 241. It would be tempting to suggest that the unknown Hebrew place-name יַעֲזָר is a corruption or deliberate alteration of עזר, corresponding to Ugaritic term *g̃zr*, “hero” or “warrior” according to Vaughn 1993, 424.

¹¹⁶⁶ Or possibly from Carmel. Vulgate translates the word “Carmelo”.

¹¹⁶⁷ Compare with the city of שֹׁדֵד. There is a possibility that the coastal town was likewise a royal centre.

area of Moab, and some whose locations are wholly unknown, like Jazer. Hebron was not only the city where David was believed to have begun his reign, it has also been theorized as having been a NWS or ‘Canaanite’ royal centre in the EBA. Over 500 seals stamped with the words “*lmlk hbrn*” have been found in the area of Palestine. While the meaning of the inscriptions is a subject of heavy debate, there is an unarguable connection between Hebron and kingship.¹¹⁶⁸

It seems as though the Jeremiahic verse may contain an earlier formulation of the material, as it not only preserves a probably original tricolon, but also forms the more coherent passage. Furthermore, material is more likely to be added with the passing of time rather than felt to be extraneous and then removed. The tricolon disappears, however, when we come to Jer. 48:33. The verse corresponds rather well to the verse of Is. 16:10, only in this case it is the Isaiahic verse that has retained a tricolon. The middle stich of Is. 16:10 is missing from Jer. 48:33, where instead a seemingly superfluous *ומארץ מואב* (“and from the land of Moab”), has been added, possibly as a means of tying the verses more firmly to the theme of Moab’s fate, which is the context of the verses in their current place *vis-à-vis* the wider text. The sea is also mentioned once in the Book of Nahum (in 1:4), in a context that is similar to the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic verses: “He *rebukes the sea* and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; the blossoms of Lebanon wither”.¹¹⁶⁹ With the rebuking of the sea, the Nahumic verse also seems to tie the tradition of the withering of nature more securely to the context of the Combat Myth, as the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages merely mention the word ‘sea’.

The cult poem or lamentation would seem to be preserved only in part in Jeremiah, ending with the death of the king and the withering of nature that followed. After this both Jeremiah and Isaiah return to the topic of the fate of Moab. The death and resurrection of the god in the person of the king would have taken place during the harvest season as a part of an autumnal festival. Summer fruits, the harvest, and wine-pressing are mentioned in both the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic verses. Were the verses originally a lamentation over the fate of Moab, the harvest season seems a rather odd occasion for it. Both prophets seem to indicate that it was the hubris of Moab that caused its downfall, so to employ poetry which had an association with the king – indeed lamenting the downfall of

¹¹⁶⁸ See Davies 1991, inscriptions 105.001–004.

¹¹⁶⁹ גִּזְעָר בַּיָּם וַיִּבְשֶׁהוּ וְכָל-הַנְּהָרוֹת הִתְיַבְּבוּ אֲמֵלֶל בִּשְׁחַר וְכָרְמֶל וְפָרַח לְבָנוֹן אֲמֵלֶל.

the king – seems especially fitting.

It must be noted that both the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic verses are framed by the *Leitwort* קִיר-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, “City of the Sun” (perhaps a reference to Heliopolis-Baalbek in Lebanon, or a city of similar association); it appears in Jer. 48:31, 36 and Is. 16:7, 11, but nowhere else in the HB. More specifically, Is. 16:7 features the variant form קִיר-הַרְשֵׁת, which may be a dittography, as the following word also begins with a ה. The book-ending of the verses between two mentions of the City of the Sun may indicate the use of a quotation, indicating that the author was writing about Moab and got as far as קִיר-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, made an excursus to the cult poem, and afterwards returned to his original topic. The shared proper name, which is not used elsewhere, suggests that both authors borrowed the material from another (or even the same) source, whether literal or oral. But regardless of the origin of the tradition or the textual relationship between the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages, they are clearly drawing from common mythological poetic language.

I do not suggest that the source from which the prophets borrowed the verses came from the city of Ugarit, nor does there appear to be anything akin to קִיר-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ in the Ugaritic texts. There is also no single Ugaritic text which can be shown to offer a direct word-for-word parallel for the Isaiahic or Jeremiahic verses. But on the level of vocabulary there is quite a considerable amount of affinity between the prophetic verses and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. The vine (גפן) corresponds to the Ugaritic *gpn* (featured for example in the name of Baal’s helper(s), *gpn-w-ugr*), often interpreted as meaning “the vine and the field”. There is also mention of the goddess Anat drinking her tears as she comes across the body of Baal in KTU 1.6 I 9–10:

<i>‘d.tšb’.bk</i>	Upon her fill she weeps
<i>tšt.kyn.udm’t</i>	drinking like wine her tears

One could also speculate whether the curious “lords of the nations” may have alluded to a line similar to the one in KTU 1.6 I 6: *b’l.mt.my.lim* (“Baal is dead, what of the peoples?” or “Baal is dead, the water of the peoples”). The verb *npl*, “to fall”, is also used Baal in KTU 1.5 VI 30–31: *t[mg.]/lb’l.np[l]* (“she happens upon the fallen Baal”).

A continuation of the same theme can be found in Deutero-Isaiah, and with the aid of Is. 24:4–15 we may be able to reconstruct the ending of a cult poem dealing with the ritual dying and resurrection of the king. It must be noted that as the material in Deutero-Isaiah seems to be of a later date, the theme of the verses has been thoroughly “Yahweized”, which is to say that while it employs similar

vocabulary to the earlier verses, the focus of Deutero-Isaiah is on the majesty of Yahweh. While one may think that the glorifying of the god would be the earlier stage of development from which the earthly king partook later on, this is not the case with the texts of the HB. It seems that after the time of the Babylonian Exile and the disestablishment of the Judahite monarchy, ritual texts and functions which had been connected with the earthly monarch (e.g. in which the earthly monarch partook of the kingship of the god), were transferred to the heavenly monarch alone.¹¹⁷⁰ This development can be seen in the verses of Is. 24. This is not to say that the Deutero-Isaiahic passage could not preserve some elements of genuine antiquity, as it could well be drawing from the same source of liturgical or ritual poetry. The basis for the addition of the verse in Deutero-Isaiah is, however, probably the Proto-Isaiahic passage rather than motif attraction.

It must be pointed out that the Deutero-Isaiahic passage does not seem to be dealing with the theme of Moab. The ending of Is. 24:3 “For Yahweh had spoken this word” is probably a formula, announcing the beginning of a quotation. The ending of the quotation is more difficult to ascertain. It could be that the beginning of verse 16 belongs to the quotation, and the *וְאָמַר* (“And I say”) in Is. 24:16 returns us to the prophet’s speech. Is. 24 does not share as much vocabulary with the Proto-Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages as they share with each other, but there are some words that seem to attest to the passage’s affinity with the prior verses. One could attempt to reconstruct a more complete version of the proposed cultic poem or song by using these three sources, but it is not necessitated by the present inquiry. Furthermore, I do not feel the need to postulate the existence of an “original” version, as it is more likely that the verses existed in a variety of formulations.

It must also be stated that at least two versions of the ‘withering nature’ motif can be found in the Ugaritic texts. In the Baal Cycle, the withering of nature follows the death of Baal at the hands of Mot. In the Aqhat-narrative, the same follows after Aqhat’s death at the hands of the goddess Anat. The motif is much more prominent in the Aqhat-narrative; it is implied but not really stressed in the Baal Cycle, although it is difficult to know the context to which the motif originally or initially belonged.¹¹⁷¹

¹¹⁷⁰ Edelman 2009, 82. Keel (1999, 205–40) discussed the roles of victors in narratives and the transference of the symbols of victory from one victor to the other.

¹¹⁷¹ The motif of the withering and flourishing of nature would seem to belong more naturally with

While it is especially KTU 1.5 IV and KTU 1.6 I of the Baal Cycle that share a wealth of vocabulary and verses with the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages, there are also verses in the Aqhat-narrative which may have lent influence, although not directly, on the Biblical texts. In KTU 1.19 I 44–46 we read the following:

<i>bl.ṭl.bl.rbb</i>	No dew, no rain
<i>bl.šr'.thmtm</i>	no song of the deeps ¹¹⁷²
<i>bl.ṭbn.ql.b'l</i>	no good-making voice of Baal

While the vocabulary is different from Is. 16:10, the Isaiahic passage seems syntactically similar, especially in *לא־יִירֹן לא ירעע יין ביקבים לא־יִדְרֹךְ*, “no singing, no shouting, no treading of the wine in the presses”. But again it must be stressed that no one-to-one correspondence is to be found in the verses. Ps. 135:6, touching upon the theme of creation, features the parallelism between *יָמִים* and *תְּהוֹמוֹת*:

135:6	כָּל אֲשֶׁר-תִּפְּצֵי יְהוָה עָשָׂה	Everything that pleased Yahweh, he had done;
	בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ	In the heavens and on earth,
	בְּיָמִים וּכְל-תְּהוֹמוֹת	in the seas and all the deeps.

This verse names Yahweh as the maker of everything in the sea or the seas themselves. The verse recalls a creator god, but it does not seem to imply a Combat Myth. Verse 7 does, however, feature a theophany of the Storm-God: Yahweh makes lightning for the rain and brings forth the wind. Verses 9–11 feature earthly monarchs of other nations defeated by Yahweh, which begs the question of whether this could be an example of the amalgamation of god and king. Also related to the concept is the *Völkerkampf*-motif, which has been discussed as one of the further historicizing developments of the Combat Myth.¹¹⁷³

This interpretation could be further supported by the description in v. 15–17 of the idols of the (other) nations the ‘works of men’s hands’, suggesting that the god of the Psalm is a living god. While it would seem that the hostile nations and bodies of water are described using similar and the same terms in certain passages,¹¹⁷⁴ I do not agree with the assertion that the nations are described as

the narrative of a divine rather than a mortal hero, but this is only conjecture. I find the Aqhat-passages relevant here because they concern the character Baal rather than Aqhat. The theme of the text, in any case, is kingship.

¹¹⁷² Here *thmtm* probably refers to the supercaelian sea.

¹¹⁷³ Originally introduced by Mowinckel 1922, although already suggested by Gunkel 2006^[1895], 58. Mowinckel divides the motifs into *Drachenkampf*, *Götterkampf*, and *Völkerkampf*. Mowinckel connected these with his proposal of Yahweh’s enthronement festival in Jerusalem. The motif has been revisited recently by Miller II 2013.

¹¹⁷⁴ The connection between the waters and hostile nations is also found in LUGAL-E. Note further that the land of Gutium was called “the fanged serpent of the mountain” (E.2.13.6.4).

chaotic – no more than the waters are.¹¹⁷⁵ What the hostile nations are is adversarial, just as the waters are adversarial to the Storm-God. While it is not explicitly stated, this could imply that the god of the psalm may have been represented in the figure of the king in flesh and blood, as in vv. 16–17 it is implied that he has ‘eyes that see’ and that there is ‘breath in his mouth’.

There are enough similarities to warrant the hypothesis that the prophets used material which owed broadly to the same tradition as the Ugaritic texts, but it would seem that they (or a source that they had in common), perhaps somehow involved in the temple cult, reworked the material extensively – unless we assume that the changes were brought about naturally with the passing of time and changing of context. According to Ez. 8:14, the cult of Tammuz was practised in Pre-Exilic times at the Jerusalem temple where ritual wailings were performed for the god. It is possible that these wailings of Tammuz (cf. KL 26:Rev. III, “And gardens of themselves withhold their fruit, the city weeps for [king] Libit-Ishtar who sleeps”) underlie the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages, but the close affinity to NWS texts of the language and vocabulary used in the passages must be noted.

There is also similar vocabulary in 2 Sam. 15:23, which may belong to the same tradition as the above verses. In this passage we find the following:

וְכָל־הָאָרֶץ בּוֹכִים And the whole land was weeping;
 קוֹל גָּדוֹל a great voice!
 גָּדוֹל וְכָל־הָעָם עֹבְרִים And the whole people were *crossing over*;
 וְהַמֶּלֶךְ עָבַר בְּנַחֲלֵי קִדְרֹן And the king crossed over the brook of Kidron;
 וְכָל־הָעָם עֹבְרִים And the whole people were *crossing over* ;
 עַל־פְּנֵי־הַדֶּשֶׁר אֶת־הַמִּדְבָּר Before the road of the desert.¹¹⁷⁶

The repetition of the line וְכָל־הָעָם עֹבְרִים makes it likely that this verse (or parts of it) were originally part of a song, chant or some form of oral poetry. There is similarity in vocabulary between the above verse and the Jeremiahic and Isaiahic verses, such as the words for ‘earth’, ‘weeping’, ‘great’, ‘voice’. It may be

¹¹⁷⁵ E.g. Kloos 1986, 116: “Now it cannot be doubted, that the inimical nations which are overthrown or judged according to the OT, are sometimes depicted as a power of chaos” (*sic*).

¹¹⁷⁶ Reading the word מִדְּבַר as a *pi’el* participle of דָּבַר, ‘to flee’, one might even suggest continuing the verse with the mocking sing-song passage of Ps. 114:3–6:

“The sea saw it and fled,
 the Jordan turned backward;
 the mountains skipped like rams,
 the hills like young sheep;
 What is with you, oh sea, that you flee?
 oh Jordan, that you turn backward?
 oh mountains, that you skip like rams?
 oh hills, like young sheep?”

While Ps. 114 is rather short, this passage and its blatant anthropomorphism does seem rather out of place with regard to Israel’s “coming forth out of Egypt”. As a reaction, it would seem more proper either as a show of Yahweh’s strength – or as his manifestation in the form of the king.

suggested that the verse from 2 Sam. contains a word-division error, whether intentional or unintentional, in the aforementioned repeated stich. We may entertain dividing the words **וּכְלִי-הַעַם עָבַר יָם** in the context, with the verb in the pf. 3 sg.m. form translated “and the whole people crossed the sea”, recalling the Exodus tradition. This finds support not only on the parallelism of the brook in the following stich, but also from the previous verse 2 Sam. 23:22, where an impf. 3 sg.m. form of the verb **עָבַר** is used of “Ittai the Gittite, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him”.¹¹⁷⁷

It makes sense for the number of the verb to remain the same while the tense or aspect changes to mark the switch from the doing of something to something having been done. We also find the word ‘sea’ together with the verb **עָבַר** in Pss. 8:9, 66:6, 78:13, Zech. 10:11, Jer. 25:22, Is. 16:8, 23:2 (with the exact formulation **יָם עָבַר**), suggesting that faulty word-division or its intentional alteration is not beyond the realm of possibility in this context.¹¹⁷⁸ Interpreted in such a fashion, the verse is reminiscent of a ritual or a ritual act of crossing a body of water. It must be noted that the sea is mentioned in the Isaiahic and both Jeremiahic passages. While the meaning of the sea in these verses remains rather obscure, it goes to show that there was some connection between the crossing of the sea and weeping. What is significant about the verse of 2 Sam 15:23 is that it explicitly connects this vocabulary to the king, thereby offering support to the interpretation of **הַיָּד** as a term associated with kingship in the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic verses.

Widengren (1956) suggested that in Israelite cult the king played the role of the dying and rising god, following the theory laid out by Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (1890) and espoused in the context of Biblical Studies by Hooke (1933). Widengren connected the ritual drama of the cultic dying and rising of the king to a New Year’s festival, which was understood taking place in autumn. It was on the occasion of this festival that the king, as an embodiment of the god, defeated the ‘forces of chaos’. This cultic occasion would have involved his ritual humiliation in the form of a drama depicting the dying and resurrection of the god, after which

¹¹⁷⁷ **וַיַּעַבְרֵם אֶתִּי הַגָּבִי וְכָל-אֲנָשָׁיו וְכָל-הַטָּר אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ**.

¹¹⁷⁸ My provisional translation of the verse is as follows:

And all the land was weeping:

a great thunder

and the whole people crossed over the sea

and the king crossed over the Brook of Kidron

and the whole people crossed over the sea

before (his) power, the one that fled

he was enthroned on the divine mountain.¹¹⁷⁹ This interpretation certainly seems to owe a lot to the Ugaritic myths, and Baal has often been viewed as a prototype of the ‘Dying and Rising God’.¹¹⁸⁰

Langdon also supported the idea that in the Semitic cult the king of the city played the role of the dying god, suffering symbolic death at the hands of his people.¹¹⁸¹ It would be easy to read this tradition into the passages. Wyatt suggested that the *ydd*-DN construction represented a cognomen given to the kings of Judah. This is why I have provisionally translated the word דד as ‘Beloved’ in the above passages. Both of the passages, Isaiahic and Jeremiahic, are book-ended by verses discussing the fate of Moab. It is possible that the above passages were connected to the area of Moab or Hesbon – and found their current places in the prophetic writings through motif attraction. It is unclear whether there is a dependent relationship between the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages, or whether both drew upon the poetic material from a common source.

Day associated Hos. 31:1 “and other verses” with the concept, implying knowledge of Baal as a dying and rising god, “such as we find at Ugarit”. The idea of Baal as a dying god is connected with his battle against Mot in KTU 1.5 and 1.6, but it is noticeable that it is the sea that is mentioned in all of the Hebrew texts with a proposed connection to the concept. Day also submitted that Hos. 7:14 attests a “Baalistic mourning rite known from Ugarit”. This would imply knowledge in ancient Israel of the ritualistic mourning of the god and, I submit, the king as his earthly or secular manifestation.¹¹⁸² Although Baal clearly seems to suffer defeat at the hands of Mot, it must be stressed that the concept of the dying and rising god is not uncontroversial – and the possible cultic aspects of it involving the king are even less so.¹¹⁸³

The idea of the dying and rising god has little bearing on the concept of the Combat Myth, apart from the fact that a combat has been posited as preceding the dying of the god, with the king performing the role in a ritual battle in the cult. As

¹¹⁷⁹ Widengren 1958, 191–199. He also connected the *hieros gamos* -ritual with the same autumnal festival, following Hooke 1933.

¹¹⁸⁰ Mettinger 2001, 55ff.

¹¹⁸¹ Langdon 1914, 25. “After considerable investigation and reflection I have adopted Frazer’s views on this point”.

¹¹⁸² Day 2010, 206. Cf. Hos. 2:18: “On that day, says Yahweh, you will call me ‘my husband’, and no longer will you call me ‘my Baal’”.

¹¹⁸³ Leick (1991, 35) calls Dumuzi’s death in Inanna’s Descent “the only case of a complete and irreversible resurrection in Ancient Near Eastern literature”. The “substitution theme” of the myth is also found in connection with Enlil, Nergal, and Damu.

we have only a few texts witnessing to the ritual use of *EE* in the Babylonian area, and no clear texts evidencing the ritual use of the Baal mythos in the Eastern Mediterranean area, such propositions must remain provisional. The idea that the tradition of the dying and rising god might be found in the Biblical texts is purely hypothetical. But with regard to the vocabulary used in the Isaiahic and Jeremiahic passages discussed previously, I suggest, following Wyatt's discussion on the root *ydd*'s use in royal titles, that the word *הידד* in the above passages might be read not as 'shouting', which is the traditional reading, but as 'the Beloved', akin to the use of 'beloved' (*הדודים*) in Cant. 5:1, 'my well beloved' (*הדודי*) in Is. 5:1, and 'beloved' (*dāmu*) or 'spouse' (*^dda-mu-mu*, "my spouse", e.g. RAW IV 27 I:5, RAW IV 30 II:14, CT XV20–21:2, 4) in the Babylonian Ishtar and Tammuz poems. The term here may be understood not as a royal title,¹¹⁸⁴ but as the *cultic name* of the king.

Wyatt pointed out that we do not have other Levantine examples of the formula *mdd/ydd*-DN appearing outside of the Ugaritic texts.¹¹⁸⁵ I do not find this surprising, insomuch as we have no other examples of NWS cultic poetry either. Wyatt notes that the term had little usage in the HB outside of cultic poetry (ie. Psalms or Canticles), even though he does not make a connection between the use of the term and cultic poetry as such. Note, however, the use of the word 'Beloved' in connection with Tammuz in the Babylonian laments; the deity's actual divine name is never mentioned in them, and the term functions as a circumlocution of it. There is indication that such an epithet was already employed by the Sargonic kings. See E2.1.5.6, for example, where Šar-kali-šarri fashions himself *^dEN.LÍL LUGAL i-li ... DUMU da-di-šu*, "the beloved son of Enlil, king of the gods". In the same inscription he states that he went to Nippur to stand beside his father; it is unclear whether the reference is to Enlil or to Naram-Sin, as though the two were considered one and the same in the inscription. Šar-kali-šarri's successor furthermore assumed the name Dudu – or, at the very least, he is not known by any other name.

While one might suggest an extremely tenuous link between the term *mdd il ym* in Tammuz's alternative name *^dab-ba* (e.g. K.2004, 42, SAI 2.505, CT 24:16–17), the more usual form of the name is *ab-ú* (or *ab-ba-ú*)¹¹⁸⁶ of unknown

¹¹⁸⁴ Or a designation of the heir apparent, as proposed by Wyatt 2005 [1985], 18.

¹¹⁸⁵ Wyatt 2005 [1985], 16–18.

¹¹⁸⁶ See Langdon 1914, 8.

meaning, which could plausibly have been confused by a NWS scribe with A-AB-BA, making *mdd il ym* an erroneous *calque* of the Sumerian *da-mu* or *mu-ud-na* ^d*ab-ba*, ‘beloved (god) Tammuz’. Tammuz was also called *bēl girsū* (e.g. SBP 160:14), which Langdon translated as “the lord of the flood”. It must be noted that Langdon does not seem to differentiate between Dumuzi and Dumuzi-Abzu, “true child of the abyss”, a goddess figure,¹¹⁸⁷ suggesting that he was known as the son of Ea, “lord of the nether sea”. Note that even some rulers of the Pre-Sargonic period held the title “beloved of Dumuzi-Abzu” (KI-ÁG-^dDUMU.ZI ZU.AB, e.g. E1.9.3.1 vi 2–3).

No connection between Tammuz and Yamm has been suggested. The relationship between Tammuz and Baal would be somewhat better supported, both being “dying and rising gods” in mythology, and characters roles that kings assumed in their respective cults (icon-object). According to Langdon, the name *ab-ú* was later also associated with Nebo and Marduk, representing “probably a type of the dying god”. The Akkadian word *dādu*, featured in texts both from Mari and Ebla, on the other hand, is directly related to the NWS *dd*-cluster, and featured as an element in personal names.¹¹⁸⁸ The more likely precedent and source for the Ugaritic term *mdd il* is found, however, in the epithet of the Amorite kings, *na-ra-am* ^dIškur, which may well have been the translation of a title of similar styling in the Amorite language.

What remains is that the Jeremiahic and Isaiahic verses are poetic, and possibly examples of cultic poetry. This is further supported by the use of the terms יִדְדֵי (ל) and יוֹדֵי in Is. 5:1. In the passage of Is. 5:1–7, the terms are associated with a vineyard, which is explained as standing for “the house of Israel”. It seems apparent that this eroticized song of harvest had a political dimension (“a vineyard there was for my well-beloved on a very fertile hill”, i.e. the “men of Judah” made for him a very good kingdom). The previously discussed passages may borrow from an earlier narrative tradition of the cultic suffering and the annual ritual dying of the king, akin to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. This interpretation may gain indirect support from Ahlström. Commenting on Ps. 89, Ahlström suggested that the cultic function of the psalm was the king’s ritual humiliation at the renewal of the year. But according to him, the god whose role

¹¹⁸⁷ Langdon 1914, 6. The Sumerian word DUMU is often translated as ‘son’ even though it can signify offspring of either gender.

¹¹⁸⁸ Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003, 265. The element in personal names has been studied by Sivan 1984.

the king played in the cult drama was the Canaanite vegetation-god *Dwd*, son of Yahweh.¹¹⁸⁹

Such a god is unknown from other sources (although some have read the *dwd* of the Mesha stele l. 12, 31¹¹⁹⁰ and the Tel Dan stele l. 9 as references to a divinity).¹¹⁹¹ While several attempts have been made to figure out the exact meaning of David's name, or at the very least the significance of the root *dwd*, few have succeeded in shedding light on the issue.¹¹⁹² However, postulating an otherwise unknown god named *Dwd* seems unnecessary, and Ahlström's theory has received its share of criticism over the years, although there are some who still hold that a divinity called *Dod* existed.¹¹⁹³ What makes the proposition relevant, however, is the possible use of this epithet in the royal adoption of the monarch by the divinity (i.e. '*Dwd*, son of Yahweh' referring not to a divinity, but the king).

Interpreting *Dwd*, *ydd*, *h^ayyedīd*, or indeed David as the king's cultic name, on the other hand, seems more plausible, given the extant texts.¹¹⁹⁴ One of the interpretations of the name discussed by Mykytiuk is taking it as the title of an official, "perhaps a military leader".¹¹⁹⁵ While he suggested that it may have originated from a personal name akin to the Roman 'Caesar', the opposite proposition may also be entertained: that *dwd* was initially a general noun which later became a proper name, perhaps via its use as an epithet or cognomen, either of a single individual or – as the title of crown-princes akin to the Bar-Hadad of Aram-Damascus – individuals. While the use of the name in the Biblical texts attests to the employment of the name by a leader, even a military leader, the

¹¹⁸⁹ Ahlström 1959.

¹¹⁹⁰ The inscription features the form DWDH, translated either as 'its Beloved' or 'its David', referring to an object from the city of Ataroth.

¹¹⁹¹ For discussion, see Mykytiuk 2004, 121ff.

¹¹⁹² Mykytiuk (2004, 121–126) discussed nine possible ways of interpreting the name.

¹¹⁹³ See Barstad 1999, 259–262, for discussion. Mykytiuk (2004, 122) names Knauf, de Pury, and Römer as having supported the view "set forth in the twentieth century", even though the "acceptance of such a deity's existence has greatly decreased in the absence of clear evidence". Note, however, Albright (1934, 139) discussing the connection between *Dôd*, a "god of fertility", whom he calls "properly the storm-god *Dat*" who had been "secondarily combined with *dôd*, 'love'". What is significant is not the support for a divinity named *Dod*, but the connection he makes between the Storm-God and the stem for 'love'. If the Beloved is seen as one of the epithets of the Storm-God, then there is little need to postulate it as the proper name of a separate, distinct divinity.

¹¹⁹⁴ One might also speculate on the use of 'david' or 'beloved' as the epithet of or a euphemism for Hadad, whose name was considered too sacred to be used or written down during the time of the writing of the Baal Cycle, outside of select sacred myths and as a theophoric element in names, according to De Moor 1990, 72. De Moor also suggests that in KTU 1.2 IV 28, even the name Baal would have been replaced by the word *šm*, 'the name', paralleling the development with the name of Yahweh. One must contend with the fact that the name Baal may already have been a circumlocution for a divine name.

¹¹⁹⁵ Mykytiuk 2004, 121.

apparently amorous meaning of the word sits ill with its interpretation purely as a military title. Whoever the holder of the epithet ‘Beloved’ was, an *election* by a god seems to underlie the term. While it will remain a matter of contention, I have chosen in this dissertation to interpret the name David as an epithet, the Beloved, which has some royal connotations, at least inasmuch as the term is used in Biblical *poetry* (to claim that it is used as a proper personal name nowhere in the HB would be overstating the case, while on the other hand, the use of a personal name in hymnic poetry, which is usually meant to seem ageless, would seem strange).¹¹⁹⁶

There is some evidence that ‘David’ was used as a general term even in the time of the writing of the Qumran Psalter.¹¹⁹⁷ Whether it refers to the king himself or to the heir apparent is often impossible to tell, and in many cases the distinction makes little difference. A further connection between words of the *dd*-cluster and kingship may be proposed in the Ugaritic term *ddn*, which has thus far escaped comprehensive interpretation and is usually translated as ‘the Didanu’,¹¹⁹⁸ referring to the dead ancestors of the king in the royal mortuary cult (cf. e.g. KTU 1.161:3, 10, where the term is paralleled by *rpi arš* (‘the rapiuma-spirits(?)’¹¹⁹⁹ of the earth’)¹²⁰⁰ and followed by the invocation of the dead kings by name). The dead kings are effectively described as *qbš ddn*, ‘assembly of Didanu’, which I propose actually has the meaning of ‘assembly of those who have borne the title of Beloved’ (i.e. kings – thus literally ‘assembly of *our* beloved’, the dead kings).¹²⁰¹ While my translation is unconventional, the interpretation of the Didanu as the deified royal ancestors is well accepted. Spronk interpreted the *ddn* as Dedan, the first among the dead kings, a kind of *primus inter pares*.¹²⁰²

Whybray argued that since the monarchy in Israel was of such a short

¹¹⁹⁶ David as the epithet of a deity is also discussed by Mykytiuk 2004, 124.

¹¹⁹⁷ “David” or Beloved was used to refer to Biblical poetry, “the most prominent component in the third part of the Jewish Canon”. See Flint 1998, 467–468.

¹¹⁹⁸ See Tsumura 1993, 42, who seems to interpret it as a personal name, although he does not really expound on his views on the matter. Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003, 266, also interpret it as a PN, identifying it as a deified variant of *dm*, the mythical ancestor and founder of the Ugaritic dynasty. While I do not agree that this is necessarily the case (employing the principle of Occam’s Razor), it is noteworthy that the name or title *dm* is of Amorite derivation and thus of some antiquity. See Olmo Lete & Sanmartín for bibliography.

¹¹⁹⁹ See Tsumura (1993, 41) for a bibliography on the discussion on the term. Tsumura himself barely remarks on the question.

¹²⁰⁰ The term *rpu* is often considered a technical term for the dead ancestors, but the solution is not free of controversy.

¹²⁰¹ This is to say, *dd* with the pl. 1c. enclitic pronoun *-n* with a simple genitival meaning.

¹²⁰² Spronk 1999, 440. Spronk also notes that the dead kings are called one by one to receive their sacrifices in the text. Note also the connection that Frayne (2013, 88) makes between the *ddn* and the titans of Greek mythology.

duration and so vigorously criticized by the prophets, it is unlikely that the king played a central part in the religious life of ancient Israel. He warned the reader not to overestimate the cult that grew up around the monarchy, because while some of it may have had actual meaning, much it would have been idealistic, ephemeral, and hyperbolic. Whybray also believed that the role of David as king was more secular than sacral.¹²⁰³ This sidesteps the issue that the institution of kingship existed in some form in the cities of Palestine long before the monarchies of Judah and Israel entered the scene (as evidenced by the Amarna texts, EA 285–290), and it would have been only natural for the emergent monarchies to adopt some of the practices, traditions, and symbolism of the existent cults.¹²⁰⁴

A king had existed in Jerusalem at least from the time of the Amarna letters, so to assume that no royal cult existed there before “the time of David”, around whose person the entire institution would have been newly fashioned, seems rather unlikely. This does not mean that the practices were not idealistic and hyperbolic; this may indeed have been their very nature. And while such institutions are usually extremely resistant to change, barring some irresistible outside pressure, in light of the changing political tides in the ANE, some aspects of royal cults may even have been quite ephemeral. But the connection between the sea and royal ideology, of which the epithet Beloved is an example, seems to re-surface quite regularly in ANE literatures, the Hebrew literatures among them. And yet the Combat Myth in the NWS cultural area was not connected only to the sea, as there is indication that local versions of the myth were attached to multiple bodies of water, especially rivers.

5.1.4 List of Monsters Slain by the Goddess Anat as a List of Water Courses

In this chapter I discuss the list of monsters defeated by the goddess Anat in KTU 1.3 III 38–42, and the interpretation of the names of the creatures as bodies of

¹²⁰³ Whybray 1962, 136–150.

¹²⁰⁴ While the ruler of Jerusalem has the title of king (LUGAL) in the Amarna texts, whether the ruler was called by the name of king or prince or judge, the need for the legitimization of power is unchanged by the styling of title. Likewise, the need to *project* this authority upon one’s own people is largely unaffected by whether the actual status of the ruler was that of suzerain, sovereign, or vassal.

water in the Eastern Mediterranean area. Alongside Yamm and Nahar these creatures included Lotan (*ltn*), Tannin (*tnn*), the Slithering serpent (*b_{ltn} 'qltn*), the Seven-headed potentate (*šlyt šb 't rašm*), Desire, El's beloved (*mddil arš*), Rebel, El's calf (*'gl il 'tk*), Fire, El's bitch or "bitch of the gods" (*klbt ilm išt*), and Flame, El's daughter (*bt il qbb*). While these monsters, or at least some of them, have often been associated with Yamm, most likely the text lists separate enemies for Baal.¹²⁰⁵ A similar list of creatures is repeated in shorter form in KTU 1.5 I 1–5 as Mot's dialogue toward Baal, although Mot does not claim to have defeated Yamm (and *ltn*, mentioned by Mot, is missing from Anat's list). While it is impossible to demonstrate, the beginning of the list – which may have mentioned the sea and the river – may be among the missing lines at the end of KTU 1.4. Many of the lexical items in the list are also found in the texts of the HB.

As mentioned previously, Canaan discussed the numinous nature of water sources in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to him, they were in earlier times associated with gods, and later with both demons and holy men.¹²⁰⁶ Although he examined the traditions of the Palestinian area specifically, according to him one and the same "formed a foundation stone of ancient superstition and mythology" for the Semitic peoples in general. Along with textual variants of Is. 51:9–10, which I will discuss subsequently, I submit that the foremost among the witnesses to the tradition is KTU 1.3 III 38–42.¹²⁰⁷

lmḥšt.mdd/ilym. Did I not¹²⁰⁸ destroy the beloved of El, Yamm?¹²⁰⁹
lkl.t.nhr.il.rbm Put an end to the great god, River?
lištbm.tnn.ištm[d]h Did I not bind Tannin and muzzle¹²¹⁰ him?
mḥšt.b_{ltn}.'qltn I destroyed the twisting serpent,¹²¹¹

¹²⁰⁵ Ringgren 1990, 93, speculates that they may have functioned as Yamm's helpers. Pitard 1998, 227–278, saw the text KTU 1.83 as evidence that Yamm and the other dragon-like characters would have been associated with Yamm. This view has been opposed by Cross 1973, 118–120; Wakeman 1973, 92–105; Day 1984, 12–17. Vidal 2004, 150, suggests that Yamm's association with monsters such as Lotan and Tunnan would emphasize the chaotic aspect of the sea and the rivers. This presupposes that there must be something inherently chaotic about the creatures themselves.

¹²⁰⁶ Canaan 1922, 4–5.

¹²⁰⁷ For a recent translation of the text as well as discussion on previous translations, see Benz 2013.

¹²⁰⁸ Some, such as Smith & Pitard 2009, favour the emphatic *la-/lu-*, "Surely I--!" Contra Hutton 2007, 287. Whether it is to be interpreted as an assertion or a rhetorical question, the nature of the boast changes very little.

¹²⁰⁹ Alternatively, "the beloved god, Yamm".

¹²¹⁰ The verb is poorly understood and has had only provisional interpretations. See Hutton 2007, 284. The reconstruction of *d* is also not universally accepted. For example, Benz 2013 suggests a reconstruction of *ištm lh*, the twin-flames that belong to him. His reconstruction has better syntax so I am inclined to accept it.

¹²¹¹ If one interprets the *l* of the initial line carrying over, the last two lines could be read in continuation of the string of questions: "(Did I not) destroy the twisting serpent, (and) the potentate of seven heads?"

šlyt.d.š bt.rašm the potentate,¹²¹² the one of seven heads

The list continues with names of monsters that are not found in the Biblical traditions, written over the lower edge of the tablet. While the list is nowhere in the Baal Cycle spoken by Baal himself, they are repeated twice, in shortened form, by the death god Mot to Baal, in KTU 1.5 I 1–3 and 1.5 I 27–30:

ktmḥs.ltn.bṭn.brḥ For you slew Lotan, the fleeing serpent,
tkly.bṭn. 'qlm Put an end to the twisting serpent,
šlyt.d.š 'bt.rašm The potentate of seven heads

Removed from its present context as a piece dialogue between the two male divinities, grammatically the words of Mot could also be read in the feminine third person singular, “For/when she slew Lotan, the fleeing serpent, she put an end...” The only occurrence of the list of monstrous creatures where grammatically feminine forms have an organic, natural context is in the boast of Anat. The possible originality of the Anat-traditions is discussed subsequently.

With regard to the epithet ‘Judge River’ that I have already discussed in connection with the OB Ordeal by River, it is interesting to note that the modern Arabic name of the river Orontes (العاصي), from the Greek Αἰζύος), has the meaning of ‘the rebel’. This name is thought to be based on the ancient native name of the river. Considering that the Ugaritic *tk* translates ‘rebel’, it may be considered as corresponding with the Orontes. Possibly the name was due to the fact that the Orontes flows in a direction opposite from the other rivers of the area. Abel speculated that the name Orontes, the Assyrian form of which was *a-ra-an-tu*, may have been a byform of ‘Aramtu’ with the meaning of “the Aramaean river”.¹²¹³ The ancient names of the river also featured the nomina Draco and Typhon,¹²¹⁴ which seem to connect the Orontes inarguably with the Combat Myth.

Note also the similarity between the names Lotan and Litani, another river of the area (Abel was the first to call attention to the mythological aspects of the names of the rivers, connecting the Litani to both the Ugaritic Lotan and to the Biblical Leviathan),¹²¹⁵ as well as the existence of the Nahr al-Kalb, an important

¹²¹² The word *šlyt*, usually translated as ‘potentate’, is of uncertain meaning.

¹²¹³ Abel 1933, 147, 149, 155–156.

¹²¹⁴ Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.7: “Though formerly called Typhon, its name was changed to that of Orontes, the man who built a bridge across it. Here, somewhere, is the setting of the mythical story of the Arimi [Arameans], of whom I have already spoken. They say that Typhon (who, they add, was a dragon), when struck by the bolts of lightning, fled in search of a descent underground; that he not only cut the earth with furrows and formed the bed of the river, but also descended underground and caused the fountain to break forth to the surface; and it is from this fact that the river got its name”.

¹²¹⁵ Abel 1933, 156.

natural border.¹²¹⁶ Abel was convinced that the twisting imagery associated with the creatures bearing the names of the rivers was due to the sinuous nature of the Orontes River, which made it easy to liken it to a serpent,¹²¹⁷ and it is easy to imagine that this was the case with most of the rivers of the area. Their association with water courses would explain the different names appearing in different versions of the list. Indeed the list may have functioned as a collection of or a mnemonic for local traditions of this type: by listing the major rivers of the area, it functions as a kind of Ugaritic *mappa mundi*. In fact, most of the lexical items in Anat's list may be associated with natural bodies of water.

The following correspondence between the monsters and Levantine water courses may be suggested, although not demonstrated (and some of the correspondents are more self-evident than others). I take the word *il* to function as a divine marker in the list (akin the Sumerian DINGIR), to designate divine water courses.¹²¹⁸

Monster:	Alternative division	Corresponding water course:
<i>mdd il ym</i>	<i>mdd il ym</i>	The Mediterranean Sea
<i>nhr il rbm</i>	<i>nhr il rbm</i>	The Euphrates/Nahr al-Kebir (Eleutheros)
<i>mdd il arš</i>	<i>mdd il arš // 'gl</i>	The Karasu (Arxeuthas)? ¹²¹⁹ // Bahr-Agoule?
<i>'gl il 'tk</i>	<i>il 'tk</i>	The Orontes (the Rebel)
<i>klbt ilm // išt</i>	<i>klbt ilm</i>	Nahr al-Kalb // ?? hot spring
<i>bt il ḡbb</i>	<i>išt bt il ḡbb</i>	The Dhabab
<i>tnn</i>	<i>tnn</i>	A spring of the dragon ¹²²⁰
<i>bṭn 'qltn</i>	<i>bṭn 'qltn / bṭn brḥ</i>	twisting river (the Meander?)
<i>ltn bṭn brḥ</i>	<i>ltn</i>	The Litani
<i>šlyt d šb 't rašm</i>	<i>šlyt d šb 't rašm</i>	Barada (= river with seven forks?)/river with 7 tributaries

The fact that it is the goddess whose name is also connected to a source of water, Anat, who defeats these foes in myth is only fitting. The word *'nt* (spring, source of the rivers) may even have functioned as a kind of rubric under which the names of the rivers were collected. Note also that Lipiński associated the ^{URU}*in-im-me* of Esarhaddon's cylinder (1 iii 2 and 6 ii' 26') with *'n-ym* "Spring at the Sea", connecting it with the village of *an-Nē'me* in Lebanon.¹²²¹ What I suggest is that a symbolic geography may be read into the texts.

¹²¹⁶ Three stelae of Ramesses II were carved to the rock face near the river to commemorate the Pharaoh's crossing of the river, an action both symbolic and strategic. Jidejian 1992, 248–249.

¹²¹⁷ Abel 1933, 154.

¹²¹⁸ The order of the creatures is different in KTU 1.3 and 1.5. See Benz 2013, 135, for syntactic analysis and "poetic logic" of the text.

¹²¹⁹ Or Wadi el-Arish, although it is much more to the South.

¹²²⁰ Edelman 2014, 77, associates the Tannin with the Nile. There does not appear to be etymological link to the ancient Egyptian name of the river, *irw* or *itrw*, but the association is a possibility, especially in the HB texts.

¹²²¹ Lipiński 2004, 21.

Babylonian monsters have also been likened to rivers and other earth formations, as I suggest the Ugaritic monsters were. The famous Babylonian *mappa mundi* (CT 22 pl. 48) from Sippar, which features an image of the map of the world encircled with water (named on the map as ^{1D}*mar-ra-tum*, ‘the bitter river’),¹²²² contains a textual key to the cities and land formations.¹²²³ The map has been dated to the 5th century, but the scribe himself states in the map that he had copied and collated it from an older exemplar. The text of l. 1–11 is extremely relevant to the politicizing of the Combat Myth, so I have translated it in full:

[...]
 [...] URU^{mes} *ab-tu*[-tu]
 [...] *m šá i-bar-ru-ú* ^dMarduk [xxx]
 [...] *u* DINGIR^{mes} *ab-tu-tu šá ina lib-bi tam-tim ú[-x]*
 [...] *-šu iz-za-zu ba-aš-mu MUŠ.HUŠ UŠUMGAL an-zu-ú gir*[-tab]¹²²⁴
 [...] *re-e*-*mu ša-bi-tum ap-sa-su-ú nim-ru ki-sa*[-rik-ku]
 [...] UR-MAH UR.BAR-*ra lu-lim ú bu-ú*[-šu]
 [...] *pa-gi-tum DÀRA lu-ur-mu šu-ra-nu hur-ba-bi-li*[-i]
 [...] *ú-ma-mu šá ina UGU tam-tim gal-l[a]-tim* ^dMarduk *ib-nu-šu*[-nu-ti]
 [...] ^dUD.ZI^{um} LUGAL.GUB *u ZALAG*-^dDagan LUGAL [xxx]
 [...] *ap-pi* HU SAG-*ma man-ma qí-rib-ši-na ul i*[-di]

[...]
 [...] cities of ruin...
 [...] which Marduk examines/surveys...
 [...] and the gods of ruin which are in the midst of the sea...¹²²⁵
 [...] stand/are accounted for: the hydra, the serpent, the dragon,¹²²⁶ Anzu, the scorpion...
 [...] the wild bu[ll], the gazelle, the sphinx/water buffalo, the leopard, the mighty bull...
 [...] the lion, the wolf, the stag, and the hyena...
 [...] the apess, the ibex, the ostrich, the feline, the chameleon...¹²²⁷
 [...] monsters, which Marduk created on the tre[mb]ling sea¹²²⁸...
 [...] Ut-Napishtim, Sargon, and Nur-Dagan, king (of)...
 [...] no one (else) has kn[own] of their head/sources in their midst.¹²²⁹

¹²²² Use of the word ‘bitter’ seems to indicate salt water, suggesting that the seas surrounding the Mesopotamian area were (at least mythologically) conceived of as a salt water river encircling the land.

¹²²³ For a recent edition of the text, see Horowitz 1998, 20–25. Part of the text is also discussed by Lambert 2013, 231–232. According to Lambert the first text section may be unrelated to the map, but I find it unlikely on the basis of such lists of monsters fitting well as the medium for transferring geographical knowledge in the Bronze Age, and because the reverse of the tablet discussed the contents of the map on the outer ring, meaning that if the first text is not a description of the contents of the map, the centre of it is left undescribed.

¹²²⁴ Lambert 2013, 231, reconstructs *lu-u₁₈-lu*, translating the “Scorpion man”, but I am not sure it is warranted here, even if it is the name of a monstrous creature in other texts.

¹²²⁵ Wyatt 2001, 81, translates “[the vas]t Sea which Marduk sees. The bridge inside her?”.

¹²²⁶ Wyatt 2001, 81, translates “the viper, great sea serpent inside”, apparently interpreting all three creatures as referring to one and the same creature.

¹²²⁷ Note the similarity of the list to the list of animals Adad-Nirari claims to have kept in his zoo in A.O.99.2:122–127. Ditto Aššurnasirpal II, A.O.101.2, who lists even more animals, admonishing his successors not to despise the animals.

¹²²⁸ Wyatt 2001, 81, translates “res[t]less sea”, Lambert 2013, 232, translates “Rolling sea”. Perhaps even ‘the surrounding sea’ in the sense of ‘churning around’ might be considered. What my translation suggests is that all the creatures were created on the sea by the Storm-God, meaning that all items are rivers or lakes (the sources of which were in the underground and supercaelian oceans).

¹²²⁹ Lambert 2013, 232, translates “no one has had experience of them”, which is probably the gist of the line. Wyatt 2001, 99, translates “Nur-[D]agan, the King of Buršaḫa[nda, w]ings like a

A reason for understanding the list of creatures as a textual key to the map is in the fact that the list of monsters, of which Lambert believed more than one has been attached to the text,¹²³⁰ is preceded by a mention of ruined cities and is followed by mention of Ut-Napishtim, Sargon, and Nur-Dagan, the great king of the Anatolian kingdom of Purushanda, who was (at least in later legend) believed to have been defeated by Sargon, having had experience of them – probably referring to areas on the outskirts of the map.¹²³¹ What the three legendary figures had in common was that they alone were believed to have reached the edge of the world and the sea therein, the ultimate source of the rivers enumerated in the map. The map was in all likelihood meant to contain *all the geographic information known to man*, and therefore the interpretation of the list as a list of the rivers (as well as other earth formations) of the ANE is feasible.

The Lexical series Antagal (MSL 17, 233:6) actually explicitly spells out the concept that I am proposing: ÍD ^dMUŠ TIN.TIR DÚB *pu-ra-tum* (“‘The Snake of Babylon’ river is called/written Euphrates”, i.e. the river which is the snake of Babylon is called, in the Akkadian language, the Euphrates), meaning that the Euphrates was known as the snake=river of Babylon. It is not merely that the rivers were thought to inhabit monsters or were symbolically attached to serpents. What the text is indicating is that the rivers were called serpents snake being synonymous with river, and that the serpent that was attached to the city of Babylon was the Euphrates. Serpent was another name for the concept of the twisting river. The proper name of the monster with which the serpent Euphrates was associated was called Irhan, who is equated with the river in several texts (e.g. RA 28, 134 ii 6: ^dSA-*ha-an* = *pu-rat-tú*). Irhan, it must be mentioned, was

bird, which no one can com[prehend]”, which does not make much sense in the context, even if the reverse of the tablet does speak of distance ‘as the bird flies’. It is the word SAG that has clearly caused difficulty in translation in this context, but understanding it literally as the head(-waters) seems to make most sense.

¹²³⁰ Lambert 2013, 232. There’s a copula between the stag and the hyena on l. 7, while the list continues on l. 8. Of course, it is possible that the creatures on l. 8 form another list, enumerating other earth formations or cities by their emblematic or totemic animal.

¹²³¹ The story of Sargon and Nur-Dagan or Nur-Daggal is told in the text called Sargon, King of Battle (Chavalas 2006, 25–29), copies of which are known as far as from the Egyptian El Amarna. The two monarchs were not contemporary and it is doubtful Sargon’s campaigns reached Anatolia, where the latter monarch was based. Lambert 2013, 232, suggests that the battle between the kings was thought to have taken place “on the edge of the world”. Note that in A.O.101.2:21–23 Aššurnasirpal describes among his feats as king the facts that he had traversed mighty mountains and seen remote and rugged regions in all the four corners of the earth.

iconographically depicted as a giant serpent on boundary stones,¹²³² further evidencing the symbolic geography at play.

Tiamat's entourage of monsters has also been likened to the list of creatures vanquished by Anat, and it may be the influence of *EE* that has encouraged this association.¹²³³ Tiamat's "galaxy of monsters" includes eleven creatures such as *bašmu* (the snake/hydra), *mušḫuššu* (the serpent), *lakhmu* (the horned snake), *ugallu* (the lion), *umu* (the bull man), *aqrab-amēlu* (the scorpion man), *kulili* (the fishman), and others. It is easy to see how some of these creatures find correspondents with the Ugaritic list, and may therefore also symbolize rivers or have geographic referents.¹²³⁴ Lewy suggested that Tiamat's creatures correspond to the names of Babylonian constellations.¹²³⁵ It is possible that they did, but their association with stellar formations does not preclude their association with other natural phenomena simultaneously.¹²³⁶

As the sky was imagined as a sea, using the same designations for rivers and constellations is not only understandable, but expected. No such suggestions have been made for the list of Ugaritic creatures, and with the existence of Yamm and Nahar in the list, it seems unlikely that the Ugaritic creatures would correspond to constellations.¹²³⁷ However, their association with rivers does not

¹²³² Lambert 2013, 238.

¹²³³ Wyatt 2005b, 705, on the other hand, discussed myths pertaining to the warrior-god Ninurta in relation to this. According to Kramer 1944, 79–80, the Ninurta tale is what "the Semitic redactors" of the *EE* had used in the construction of the epic. However, Ninurta's adversary is not the sea but the mountain, Kur, whose defeat floods the land.

¹²³⁴ The snake has an obvious cognate and the lion is reminiscent (although not cognate) of 'gl, the calf, but the rest do not find self-evident correspondents.

¹²³⁵ Lewy 1965, 277–279. According to her they were *bašmu* (Serpens), *mušḫuššu* (Hydra), *ugallu* (Leo), *kulili* (Pisces), *aqrab-amēlu* (Scorpio), *kusarikku* (Centaurus). These were constellations which "every layman in Babylonia was assumed to know". Gunkel also mentioned the constellations Hydra, Draco, and Serpens in his discussion of the Biblical monsters. The constellations and their correspondence to mythical monsters are also discussed by Frayne 2013.

¹²³⁶ Tallqvist 1943 questioned the connection of the creatures like serpent, draco, and hydra with water because they were associated with the heavens, but one must here impress the fact that the heavens were also conceived of as water, and indeed their conception as constellations in the great ocean above may hold a correspondence with their association with rivers (the source of which was thought to be in the great ocean below the earth's surface). Of course, we must be careful in applying this sort of mythical geography to the everyday conceptions of the Bronze Age man, but that is not under examination here. A mythical geography is necessarily a political geography, and the god's conquest of mythological monsters is mirrored in the king's conquests on the earthly plane, which were symbolized by the major earth formations of the conquered nations, which often featured the rivers, lakes, and mountain ranges.

¹²³⁷ Or we lack the evidence to suggest that they did. But as certain names of Biblical monsters also familiar from Ugaritic myth, such as Leviathan, did ostensibly refer to constellations (*Draco*), it is not inconceivable that the Ugaritic monsters might have done the same. Of course, their association with constellations does not preclude their association with other natural referents, such as rivers and bodies of water.

preclude this association, and in fact earthly water courses finding correspondents on the heavenly ocean is an intuitively comprehensible concept.¹²³⁸ While the monsters defeated by Anat can scarcely be interpreted as representing solely a list of the rivers of the Eastern Mediterranean any more than they can all be interpreted as naming astral constellations, both the constellations and the geographic features of the Syro-Palestinian area have probably featured names familiar from NWS mythology.

While in the map we seem to have tangible evidence of a list of monsters corresponding to rivers, the existence of such lists in mythical texts akin to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and *EE* is not unexpected. Lists of such vital information must have, and evidently did,¹²³⁹ circulate independently, and their attachment to myths celebrating the accession of the monarchic divinity to the status of the king of the gods is a natural reflection of the enumeration of conquered territories of the Mesopotamian kings in their royal inscriptions, where no region even haphazardly gazed at was left unmentioned. As the Storm-God conquered the Hydra, the king conquered the Meander, and the more serpents and monsters the god and the king claimed to have conquered, the more important they were and more likely it was that they would be remembered by subsequent generations.¹²⁴⁰

There has been much discussion over the years whether all, or at least the first five of the foes in Anat's list, are to be understood as alternative names of Yamm.¹²⁴¹ My answer to this question is yes and no. It is uncertain how the lines are to be divided into stichs, as one can observe from various editions and translations of the text. There seems to be a consensus only on the fact that Yamm and Nahar are parallel names, as they appear in parallelism elsewhere in the Ugaritic corpus. But it must still be pointed out that the parallelism of *mdd ilym* and *nhr il rbm* does not appear anywhere else in the Ugaritic corpus outside of the Baal Cycle, and therefore it should not be taken for granted that it is *zbl ym*, *tp! nhr* that is explicitly meant by these items in the list.

¹²³⁸ Note for example Esarhaddon's inscription A.0.101.30, which explicitly associates the 'streams of water' and the 'stars of heaven'.

¹²³⁹ Tallqvist 1943, 12, while discussing the Babylonian zodiac, mentions a Latin mnemonic for remembering the twelve houses of the zodiac: "Sunt Aries, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libraque Scorpius, Arcitenens, Capre, Amphora, Pisces". I am suggesting that the list of monsters likewise functioned as just such a mnemonic.

¹²⁴⁰ Lambert 2013, it must be stated, has made several of the observations discussed here, but he has not drawn the conclusions.

¹²⁴¹ A recent answer to the negative has been provided by Benz 2013, according to whom (p. 138) "Yamm is never directly identified with Tunnan or Litan".

The solution for the question of the list of monsters in the Baal Cycle I offer is that they are a collection of localized traditions of the Combat Myth, traded together as a list of key words or even first lines, connected with the bodies of water where the regional legends originated. While the names are not parallel names to Yamm *per se*, the items on the list present variant traditions of local myths of divine combat, in which these creatures of alternative styling served similar *function* to Yamm in the most famous, most prestigious iteration of the myth: the Aleppan Storm-God's conquest of the Mediterranean Sea. The names in these lists vary, as different localized traditions were circulated in different places. The attachment of the list to the text of the Baal Cycle seems to support the conclusion that these myths were seen at once as one and the same, but still important enough to record in their particularized forms on the other hand, to increase the triumphs of Baal – the baal of baals, the king of the gods, the god that in Ugarit was the lord of Saphon – but the traditions of which had originally been dispersed from the central cultic site of Aleppo to its sponsored kingdoms in the OB period. It is only inadvertently or accidentally that the list of river-monsters *also* enumerates local traditions of combat myths: the Combat Myth happened to be associated with the rivers and the traditions were transmitted with the lists along with the geographic information. The correspondence of the Ugaritic and Biblical monster-lists to the rivers of the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamian areas is at least partially the intended purpose of these lists. The function of the lists is self-evident: they serve to mark the boundaries of the kingdom, just as the phrase “from Upper sea to Lower sea” marked the boundaries of the Empire in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions.

While I consider the particular correspondences between the water courses and the monsters provisional, I have attempted to show enough evidence in this dissertation to make the concept itself seem plausible. And as rivers were symbolic or totemic of the nations that inhabited their shores,¹²⁴² the foreign (and often hostile) nations were likewise associated with the monsters that were the river. Edelman discussed the way the Egyptian Nile could represent both the Pharaoh and the land of Egypt, one assumes metaphorically, calling this association between the name of the river and its encompassing of the nation as a

¹²⁴² There is an association between river and nation found, e.g. in Jer. 2:18: “And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates?”

whole a metonymy.¹²⁴³ One must consider the Sumerian story ‘LUGAL-E’ in connection with both narratives, the Baal Cycle and *EE*, in this context. In LUGAL-E, the weapon of the storm-god Ninurta, called Sharur, boasts its master having slain a list of monsters on the mountains, among them a “seven-headed serpent” (l. 134).¹²⁴⁴ The oldest known version of LUGAL-E is from the OB period. It is possible that some Ninurta traditions had wrought influence of the Amorite myth. Regardless, the monster list is in all traditions connected with a Storm-God.

Several texts of the HB also mention monsters, many of which are cognate to the lexical items mentioned in the Ugaritic list. One of the Biblical examples of demonic beings inhabiting springs mentioned by Canaan especially was the ‘Spring of the Dragon’ (עֵין הַתַּנִּין) in Neh. 2:13,¹²⁴⁵ which in this context strongly suggests a connection between a monster-name and a factual water source. An association between sea, serpent, and geography is suggested in Ps. 68:23, which features a parallelism between the sea and a location by the name of Bashan:

אָמַר אֲדֹנָי מְבָשֵׁן אֲשִׁיב	68:23	The Lord Said: I will bring (them) back from Bashan,
אֲשִׁיב מִמַּצְלוֹת יָם		I will bring them back from the depths of the sea

Ps. 68 begins with the wish for the scattering of the enemies of god, who are requested to flee before him, setting the theme of the psalm very much into the realm of divine combat. What makes this parallelism relevant to the topic of the Combat Myth is the Ugaritic term *bṯn*, cognate with the Akkadian *bašmu* and the Hebrew פֶּתֶן, meaning serpent, found in the list of monsters.¹²⁴⁶ The word is also found in Ps. 91:31, paired with the lion (שִׁהֲלִי).¹²⁴⁷

It is not mere semantic similarity that suggests the word may be interpreted in light of the Ugaritic evidence in this context.¹²⁴⁸ Note also that the verb used in the verse, אָשִׁיב (to return, drive back, avenge in hif. impf. sg. 1), bears similarity to the Ugaritic verb *šby*, to take as prisoner. In KTU 1.2 IV 29–30 it is used twice

¹²⁴³ Edelman 2014, 77, 81. “Outsiders who had heard of the Nile and heard it was the life-blood of Egyptian social and economic life would naturally have created the metaphor, Pharaoh is the Nile”. Sasson 2014, 675, also notes the metonymy between kings and kingdoms in the ANE.

¹²⁴⁴ Fronzaroli 1997, 286, also posited the existence of a seven headed monster at Ebla based on the seven weapons used by the Storm-God.

¹²⁴⁵ Canaan 1922, 10.

¹²⁴⁶ The more usual word for serpent in Hebrew is נָחָשׁ. According to Wakeman 1973, 83, the word פֶּתֶן is mostly found in poetic texts. On the etymology of פֶּתֶן, see Hendel 1999, 144.

¹²⁴⁷ While the Psalm does not feature the word ‘sea’ and hence falls outside the scope of the thesis, it must be pointed out that it contains a wealth of vocabulary connected to kingship in a kind of call-and-answer format, beginning from the reference to the ‘shadow (צֶלַל) of Shadday’, the ‘provider of the shade for the world’ being one of the roles of the Mesopotamian king. See TUAT I, 41.

¹²⁴⁸ Bashan as a place-name is not found in the Ugaritic texts.

in connection with Yamm: *kšbyn.zbl.ym* / *kšbyn.tpt.nhr*, “Truly is Prince Yamm our prisoner, truly is Judge River our prisoner!”. Loretz called attention to the construction in v. 9, which uses the pronoun *זָה* in a fashion reminiscent of the Ugaritic *d*, as used in an epithet: “god, that one of Sion”.¹²⁴⁹ Ps. 68 also features other terms reminiscent of Ugaritic texts, such as the *רֶכֶב בְּעָרְבוֹת* or ‘rider upon the clouds’ (compare, e.g. KTU 1.2 IV 8, the interpretation supported by the *לְרֶכֶב בְּשָׁמַי* in v. 34), of v. 5, as well as the parallelism of ‘father of the orphan and a judge of the widows’ in v. 6, being the responsibilities of the ancient NWS king. The latter verse, used to describe Yahweh, describes the god with vocabulary used of mortal kings in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. KTU 1.16 VI). In v. 25, the god and the king are also explicitly paralleled. V. 7 mentions prosperity (*בוֹשְׁרוֹת*) reminiscent of the Ugaritic domestic goddesses, *ktrt*.¹²⁵⁰ Vv. 9–10 include a theophany of the Storm-God. All of these correspondences increase the probability of the broader NWS tradition underpinning the text.

There is also a curious phrase in v. 24, following the couplet paralleling the sea and Bashan, where the name of the goddess Anat has been suggested. It has been suggested that the words *לְמַעַן תִּמְחֶזֶן* ‘that it may shatter’,¹²⁵¹ could be read as *lāmmāh* ^{anāt} *tirḥaṣ*, ‘Wherefore do you wash, Anat?’.¹²⁵² It is true that the verb for washing is found in connection with Anat in the Ugaritic texts, e.g. in KTU 1.3 II 34–35, 38–40, wherein the imagery of the feet of blood recalling violence is not out of place. But so is famously the verb for crushing (*mḥṣ*), featured in the list of monsters defeated by the goddess (KTU 1.3 III 38–46), which may make a better fit for the verse.¹²⁵³ The verb is found both in the pf. and impf., so it makes little difference whether the words be divided as *לְמַ(ה) עֲנַת תִּמְחֶזֶן* or *לְמַ(ה) עֲנַת מַחֶזֶן* (wherefore Anat crushes).¹²⁵⁴ It is plain to see that a considerable amount of the mythological vocabulary familiar from the Ugaritic texts is clustered in the psalm. It must be emphasized that *on their own*, the vague

¹²⁴⁹ Loretz 1979, 452. Pat-El & Wilson-Wright 2013, 401, accept this as one of the features of archaic Biblical Hebrew. In the two uses of the pronoun in Ps. 68 they are furthermore inflected for case increasing the probability of it being an archaic relic.

¹²⁵⁰ Proposed, e.g. by Albright 1968, 119.

¹²⁵¹ The verb is sometimes translated as ‘dip’ in the context, but its basic meaning has to do with performing violence.

¹²⁵² Discussed in Day 2000, 142.

¹²⁵³ Frymer-Kensky 1981, 117, called attention to the fact that the phrase *qaqqadam māḥaṣu* (“crushing the skull”) was a legal term at Mari with the meaning of accusing or indicting. Ugaritic texts also feature the phrase “May X break your skull!” Frymer-Kensky suggested that the phrase “May X smite his skull” has the idiomatic meaning “May X indict him!”

¹²⁵⁴ Regarding the gender of the verbs used in the list of monsters slain by Anat, see below.

resemblance of the verbs or the use of archaicising pronouns would make a poor argument, but in the cluster of such allusions (whether purposeful or unintentional word-play), the evidence must bear different weight. The question then is whether the allusion was intentional or whether these poetic phrases had been transmitted in the course of time.

According to Weiser, Ps. 68 had one of the richest interpretive traditions and contained multiple possible readings and interpretations.¹²⁵⁵ Much of the psalm's contents are seen as corrupted and being a mixture of different styles, including speech, prose, description, prayer, and hymnic portions, which makes the 'origins' of the text very difficult to trace. The psalm has been considered a particularly difficult text for research. The verbal tenses are not uniform, and it contains syntactic formulations and semantic expressions that are usually not found in Hebrew poetic texts. Weiser suggested that Ps. 68 may have been pieced together from a collection of poetic quotations of some sort, some of which may have their origins in the shared NWS poetic tradition. At least portions of the psalm bear an archaic character.¹²⁵⁶

But while it is easy to see why the psalm would have been interpreted as an anthology, there are those who see it as a coherent composition. This is a problematic position, as no less than three separate opening portions have been read into the text. Vv. 33–36 have also been interpreted as loans from the 'Canaanite psalm' 29.¹²⁵⁷ De Moor suggested that the psalm uses the sacral language of Baal worship in the context of the Yahweh cult.¹²⁵⁸ While this is an attractive explanation to the clustering of phrases familiar from Ugaritic literature within the psalm, it does not explain why every one of them has been subtly altered from their ancient Semitic antecedents, as regards their use and placement within the psalm. There are no direct parallels, only rather obvious allusions.

Bashan itself is introduced in v. 16, after the scattering of the kings by the “שִׁי” of v. 15. Day interpreted the Bashan and the sea of v. 23 forming a “natural” antithetical parallelism, as Bashan seems to refer to a high place and the sea to the depths.¹²⁵⁹ To Wakeman, however, Bashan was a circumlocution for the sea

¹²⁵⁵ Weiser 1962, 481.

¹²⁵⁶ Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 160; Freedman 1980, 148.

¹²⁵⁷ Loretz 1990, 74–77; Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 161–163. Although if a collection of poetic quotations should have circulated among the psalmists, then a common or shared origin for the two might also be proposed.

¹²⁵⁸ De Moor 1990, 124.

¹²⁵⁹ Day 2000, 105.

itself.¹²⁶⁰ There is no doubt that Bashan does appear as a genuine place-name in the Biblical texts (cf. 2 Kgs 10:33), albeit there is no extra-Biblical evidence for a location by this name. The place-name is used with sufficient frequency that there is little reason to suspect that the place-name is wholly fictional. But the existence of the place does not cancel out the use of the term to allude to mythological monsters or serpents in this instance, particularly in parallelism to the sea.

I would not go so far as to suggest that they are interchangeable, but the existence of both terms in NWS popular poetry in the same mythological constellation gives reason enough to suspect that if the serpent is not invoked by the name of Bashan, then it is at least alluded to it, possibly in the form of word-play.¹²⁶¹ There is however very little evidence to suggest that the sea itself should be understood as a serpentine creature, in Palestine or elsewhere. Even in the Ugaritic texts, *bṯn* is never a primary parallel for the sea. In the list of monsters defeated by Anat, it features as a secondary parallel at best. Note also that Mot and Baal are both described as snakes in KTU 1.6 VI 19, whereas Yamm is nowhere explicitly associated with them.¹²⁶²

But Bashan's parallelism with the sea is by far not the only allusion to the list of monsters defeated by the goddess Anat in the Biblical texts. There may be a thematic parallel to the Ugaritic texts in Ps. 89:10–11, which makes mention of being called Rahab:

<p>אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בַּגָּאוֹת הַיָּם קִשּׁוּא גִלְיֹו אַתָּה תִשְׁבַּחֲהֶם אַתָּה דָּבַאתָ כְּחֶלֶל רָהַב בְּזִרְעֶךָ פָּנִיתָ אוֹיְבֶיךָ</p>	<p>89:10–11</p>	<p>You rule the swelling of <i>the sea</i>, At the rising of its waves, you still them, You crushed Rahab like a slain thing By <i>the arm</i> of your might you scattered your enemies</p>
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The verse speaks of the subjugation of the sea and other enemies of the god. While Mitchell does not discuss the passage in the context of the Ugaritic parallels, he notes the use of the vertical axis in the psalm, which he called the “spatial element to the psalm”, going “chiefly from high to low”, recalling the Ugaritic god-lists. Mitchell’s discussion on the throne of David, the highest of the

¹²⁶⁰ Wakeman 1973, 83.

¹²⁶¹ On the association of Bashan and the serpent, cf. Hendel 1999, 144. Day 1985, 113–115, 2000, 104–105, is opposed to the theory. Because of the cognate in the form of פתן, it does not seem plausible to him that another cognate would exist in the Hebrew language (see however HALOT 1996, 990, according to which פתן is a later Aramaic loan to Hebrew). Interpreting the name Bashan as a serpent would also require alteration in the vocalization of the text, and possibly even the word-division. See Day 1985 for an introduction into discussion on the matter. According to him, the interpretation of Bashan as serpent was supported by Albright, Dahood, Mowinckel and Cross.

¹²⁶² Kloos 1986, 66, pointed out that it is “wholly unwarranted” to see the sea and the sea monsters as one and the same thing, even though they do “alternatively function” as the enemy.

kings of the earth, being hurled into the ground, is also reminiscent of the story of Ashtar, although he makes no mention of the parallelism, interpreting it as the casting down of David's successor.¹²⁶³

The swelling (גִּאּוֹן) of the sea also contains the notion of pride and haughtiness, while also alluding the majestic excellence.¹²⁶⁴ With the secondary meaning of swelling, the verse may be understood containing no explicit anthropomorphism at all, although an anthropomorphism can easily be read into it. It is interesting to note that in the passage the 'arm of your might' is conceptually paralleled with 'as though one pierced (with a sword)', suggesting this to be one of the instances where arm explicitly refers to a weapon. The 'arm of your might' is repeated in v. 14, paralleled by the 'strong hand' and 'exalted right hand'. Widengren saw verses 10–13 as representing Yahweh's monarchic role in creation and in the conquest of the sea's chaotic power as a part of the creation act, reading the text in the tradition of the Gunkelian metanarrative.¹²⁶⁵ Hutton suggested the existence of thematic and syntactic parallels, as well as shared vocabulary, between verses 10–11 and KTU 1.3 III 38–46, this being the list of monsters defeated by Anat.¹²⁶⁶ Hossfeld & Zenger also connected Ps. 89 with the Reed Sea traditions.¹²⁶⁷ I will discuss vv. 89:21–26 in connection with them and the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions in section 6.4.1.

Clifford, while not explicitly connecting the psalm to the Exodus, discussed it in the context of creation, the foundation of Israel, and theme of the order of the cosmos. What makes his discussion of the psalm interesting is his theory of the 'condensation' or 'telescoping' of traditions, offering as they do a sort of snap-shot of larger traditions in the psalms – also applicable with the Exodus or the Conquest traditions, which have become somewhat conflated over the course of the trading of the texts – which, according to him, allows for the mythic elaboration of the texts.¹²⁶⁸ Ringgren, on the other hand, favoured a mythological interpretation of the psalm.¹²⁶⁹ In v. 10, the sea and its waves are paralleled by Rahab and the enemies of god, suggesting that the sea is numbered among these enemies.

¹²⁶³ Mitchell 2005, 519.

¹²⁶⁴ Klein 1987, 88; HALOT 1994, 169; Brown-Driver-Briggs 2006, 144–145.

¹²⁶⁵ Widengren 1958, 171.

¹²⁶⁶ Hutton 2007, 278–279, 292.

¹²⁶⁷ Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 405–409.

¹²⁶⁸ Clifford 1980, 39ff.

¹²⁶⁹ Ringgren 1990, 92.

The name Rahab is featured six times in the texts of the HB, twice in the psalms, and is not actually known from textual traditions outside of the HB.¹²⁷⁰ One of the occurrences of the name features in Job 28:12, where it is paralleled with the sea. The passage of Job 28:5–14 may contain a Southern form of the list of monsters, where Rahab and the Sea are joined by the Fleeing Serpent and Abaddon, whereas the Sea and Tannin are paralleled in Job 7:12.¹²⁷¹ The other incidence is in Ps. 87:4, where the name Rahab seems to stand in for the land of Egypt.¹²⁷² The sea is not mentioned in Ps. 87, nor does there seem to be anything in it to link it to the Combat Myth or to kingship beyond the name.¹²⁷³ Hossfeld & Zenger actually suggested that no actual sea monster is indicated by the mention of the name in Ps. 89 either, evidenced by this reference to Egypt by the name Rahab, seemingly suggesting that Rahab should always stand in for Egypt. I will return to the question of the interpretation of the term Rahab in connection with the list of monsters in Isaiah 51.

Sometimes the name Rahab has also been read into Ps. 104:25, which in turn does feature the sea, although written with ר rather than ה it is usually interpreted as meaning ‘wide’ and paralleling the word ‘great’.¹²⁷⁴ It is however the mention of another monster famous from the list of Anat that makes this interpretation plausible: Leviathan.

<p>זֶה הַיָּם גָּדוֹל וְרָחֵב יָדָיִם שָׁם-רָמֵשׁ וְאֵין מִסְפָּר חַיִּים קְטָנוֹת עִם-גְּדִלוֹת שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְיוּ לְיִתְּנוֹ זֶה-יֵצֶרְתָּ לְשִׁחַק-בּוֹ</p>	<p>104:25–26 This (is) <i>the great sea</i> and wide (Rahab) of hands, Therein is a multitude of creeping things, Living creatures, both small and great. There go the ships; Leviathan, whom you formed to play therein.</p>
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Ps. 104:26 also features the name of Leviathan, which Widengren believed was an alternative name for Rahab.¹²⁷⁵ The contexts of the two appearances of the name are very different. While Ps. 74 seems to recall a monstrous adversary for Yahweh, the Leviathan of Ps. 104 presents a playful, subjugated water beast, although there is some disagreement as to the translation of the verse.¹²⁷⁶

¹²⁷⁰ Day 1985, 6; Day 2000, 99; Ringgren 1990, 93.

¹²⁷¹ They were connected with the Ugaritic texts, e.g. by Nömmik 2014, 291. While Behemoth and Leviathan are mentioned in the text of the Book of Job (in 40:20–24 and 41:22–26, respectively), Nömmik (p. 297) considers them late additions. Of course, one of the reasons for the later addition may be in motif attraction caused by the use of the list in the earlier redactional layers.

¹²⁷² Day 1985, 88–101; Day 2000, 103; Wakeman 1973, 60.

¹²⁷³ For an analysis of Ps. 87 in the context of the Ugaritic myth, see Wakeman 1973, 56–60.

¹²⁷⁴ For a clear example of the conflation of the roots, see Is. 51:10.

¹²⁷⁵ Widengren 1958, 171.

¹²⁷⁶ Day 1985, 72, saw the difficulty in whether to translate the verse with “play with” or “play in”. But there have also been attempts to interpret the phrase “לְיִתְּנוֹ זֶה-יֵצֶרְתָּ”, often translated as

Spieckermann saw verses 25–26 as the work of a later redactor, which would suggest that they at the very least do form a unit.¹²⁷⁷ Interpreting the verses as a separate redactional layer is however not universally accepted.¹²⁷⁸

According to Müller, the psalm contains citations from a hymn to the Storm-God. In it, older hymns on the Storm-God were forged into a great hymn on the world domination of the Storm-God.¹²⁷⁹ Loretz saw in psalms 74 and 104 a continuation of the tradition of the Baal myths, on the behest of which the sea and the sea monsters had to be conquered repeatedly, annually, for the guaranteeing of fertility.¹²⁸⁰ In vv. 29–30 the creatures mentioned also seem to be destroyed, resulting in their “return to dust”. Lipiński thought that Ps. 104 references to sea monsters had been needlessly questioned.¹²⁸¹ It is the constellation of the different monstrous beings rather than the incidence of any one of them that suggests the mythos of divine combat underlying these verses.

Verse 104:25 features the ‘great sea’ (הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל), possibly referring to the Mediterranean. It is however worth noting that the parallel for the term is the רַחֵב הַיָּדִים, literally ‘wide of hands’. While the word רַחֵב is not entirely understood in this context, it has often been interpreted as the proper name of a monstrous being (cf. also Is. 33:21 where הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל is paralleled by יְדֵי רַחֵב). Its parallelism with the sea may suggest that in this verse, the sea could also be understood as the proper name of Yahweh’s adversary. In the context of the connection between the monsters slain by Anat and the names of water courses on the area of the Eastern Mediterranean, it would seem that the meaning of the name of Rahab might be sought among rivers or other bodies of water. If a connection between רַחֵב and רַחֵב exists, then the water course could be one notorious for its wideness, suggesting the Nile or the Euphrates. The connection with the term with Egypt would also suggest the prior. But such associations must remain speculative. Day, however,

“Leviathan whom you have formed”, in more hostile terms. If rendered into speculative Ugaritic, *ltn d (y)šrt* could ostensibly be translated as “Litan, who is the enemy” or “Litan of the enmity”. See Gordon 1947, 476; Loretz 1979, 452, 495–496. Note also that the verb שֹׁחַק has been interpreted as a secondary form of the more common verb שָׁחַק, aiding in the interpretation of playfulness. We should consider here the existence of the Ugaritic verb *šhq*, which has the meaning of destruction and desolation. See Klein 1987, 651; HALOT 1996, 1315–1316; 1999, 1464; BDB 2006, 1006–1007. Such an interpretation would naturally change the tone of the verse entirely. It could also be that both implications had existed in the text simultaneously. But gauging the intentions of the authors at any stage of the redaction of the text is likely an impossible task.

¹²⁷⁷ Spieckermann 1989, 41.

¹²⁷⁸ Day 1013, 2018.

¹²⁷⁹ Müller 2008, 211–235.

¹²⁸⁰ Loretz 1990, 93.

¹²⁸¹ Lipiński 1997, 506.

has discussed the parallels between the psalm and the Egyptian Akhenaten's Hymn to the Sun, concluding that the prior is dependent on the latter. According to him, the allusions to NWS mythologies that can be detected in the psalm are due to the Egyptians' adoption of these concepts, which explains both the 'Atenistic' and the 'Baalistic' language of the psalm.¹²⁸² The references to the Combat Myth would, then, have come to the psalm via Egypt. Egypt may certainly have been one of the channels through which NWS conceptions were transmitted to the area Palestine – albeit not the only one – and ought not to be discredited in discussions on sources of influence.

Disregarding the vocalization and word division, a rendering of “רהב יד ים” could ostensibly be made, interpreting it as either the wide hand of the sea or Rahab, the hand of the sea. As it is, the *hapax* term “wide of the hands” makes little sense.¹²⁸³ Hutton suggested a misunderstanding of the term or a deliberate misuse of mythological terminology to explain this conflation.¹²⁸⁴ Psalm 104 contains vocabulary and phrases reminiscent of the Ugaritic texts. Mentioned are, e.g. the cloud chariots in the theophany of the Storm-God in vv. 3–4,¹²⁸⁵ and the cedars of Lebanon in v. 16 (compare, e.g. to KTU 1.4 VI 19–22). Verse 6 features a parallelism of תְּהוֹם (deep) and מַיִם (water), and verse 7 mentions Yahweh's rebuking of them with the sound of his thunder (מִן-קוֹל רַעְמָה), reminiscent of Ps. 93:4. According to Loretz, the mythological vocabulary is used here in the context of creation,¹²⁸⁶ although a theophany of the Storm-God actually seems to be the immediate context of the verse, and creation may have been a secondary development.

Day also saw some correlations between Ps. 104 and the creation account of Gen. 1, claiming that the creation account of Gen. 1 has been influenced by Ps. 104. He based this on the evidence of the psalm being the “more mythological” of

¹²⁸² Day 1013, 223.

¹²⁸³ Wyatt 1996, 94, for example, posed the question of whether we should not interpret the name Rahab itself as feminine, indicating that there is much confusion in already in the treatment of the Biblical authors of this term.

¹²⁸⁴ Hutton 2007, 380.

¹²⁸⁵ Day 2000, 92, for example, has connected the phrase עָבִים רֹכָבִים to the Ugaritic term *rkb* 'rpt, 'rider of the clouds', even though it is עָבִים rather than עָרָקִל, a closer match to the Ugaritic word, that is used in the verse. Compare this to the term “rider on the steppes” (רֹכֵב בְּעֶרְבוֹת) in Ps. 68:5, which has often been connected with the Ugaritic term. See e.g. Herrmann 1999b, 704 for literature. In fact, Day 1985, 30–32, 2000, 92–93, favours the interpretation of the occurrence in Ps. 68 as the rider on the steppe, although he admits that intentional word-play may have been involved. On the *p*–*b* shift between Ugaritic and Hebrew, see Driver 1956, 128; Oldenburg 1969, 80; further literature and discussion also in Herrmann 1999b. Cf. also Ps. 18:11/2. Sam. 22:11.

¹²⁸⁶ Loretz 1979, 103.

the two, containing as it does mentions of sea monsters. Day suggested that Gen. 1 may be a de-mythologized version of Ps. 104.¹²⁸⁷ While of course the slightly tautological argument of ‘more mythological is older’ does not actually translate to it being the older or the primary text (more so as the oldest traditions do not even feature the motif of creation), it is quite probable that at least some of the poetic texts of HB do predate the prosaic account of creation in Gen. But it is also possible that older poetic language could have been used in the composition of a new psalm exalting creation after the composition of Gen. 1 and in celebration of it, following as the psalm does rather closely the acts of creation presented in Gen.¹²⁸⁸

The creation account in the psalm also features the tripartite division of the Universe; Yahweh is celebrated as the creator of the heavens, the earth, and the depths of the sea.¹²⁸⁹ Edelman opines that in Gen. 1, the battle between the gods has been eliminated and the god of the sea converted into inert primordial water. Furthermore, the investiture of Yahweh as the king of heaven is absent, even though the god of Gen. 1 clearly functions in the capacity.¹²⁹⁰ The creation of the world in Gen. 1 was connected to the Combat Myth already by Gunkel in the late 19th century, and therefore it deserves a brief overview, even though it is of limited use in the study of monarchic legitimation. The connection seems to be mostly semantic in nature, hanging on the proposition of the Hebrew word *tehôm* and the Akkadian word *tâmtum*, underlying the name of the monstrous Tiamat of *EE*, being cognates.

In Gen. 1:1, the *ruah* (wind, breath, spirit) of Elohim is upon the face of Tehôm, carrying echoes of the Babylonian creation story, of Marduk’s slaying of Tiamat. While the words *tehôm* and *tâmtu* may well be cognates, this does not necessitate a link between the mythologies. There are portions of Gen. that clearly seem to borrow from Babylonian mythology (the flood narratives being a prime example), but more evidence that the correlation of a single term is needed before drawing conclusions about literary co-dependency between the traditions. Scurlock discussed Gen. 1 as a response and a reaction to (or a disputation with) *EE*,¹²⁹¹ which seems like a reasonable assessment. Batto likewise posits that while

¹²⁸⁷ Day 2000, 101.

¹²⁸⁸ It also shares vocabulary and imagery with the “Canaanite Psalm” Ps. 29.

¹²⁸⁹ Stoltz 1999, 740.

¹²⁹⁰ Edelman 2012, 165.

¹²⁹¹ Scurlock 2013b.

it is likely that no literary dependency exists between the compositions this is not to deduce that no dependency whatsoever is to be suggested.¹²⁹²

Day suggested that the verse may have an Ugaritic background based on the fact that the form *thm* is found in the Ugaritic texts without the feminine marker *-t*, unlike in the Akkadian language and Akkadian texts like *EE*.¹²⁹³ The psalm may well have an earlier NWS prototype, like he suggests, but as תְּהוֹם is a staple of NWS mythic vocabulary, one that recalls a stage of the language when the gender of words had not yet fossilized, it does not seem that the gender of the word alone can be used to search for textual ‘prototypes’. And yet the dating of the psalm has often been seen as late, based in part on the ‘sophisticated’ theological themes presented therein. Stoltz suggested that the motif of the combat preceding creation has practically been erased from it.¹²⁹⁴ Certainly it is very difficult to read any sort of battle motif into the text, despite the presence of the monstrous creatures of Ugaritic myth. But one must contend, based on the parallel NWS evidence, that creation probably was not a central theme in the poetry of Palestine in the earliest traditions.

The word תְּהוֹם appears 36 times in the HB. It appears four times in Gen.: 1:2, 7:11, 8:2 and 49:25; twice in Exodus: 15:5 and 15:8; twice in Deuteronomy: 8:7 and 33:13; four times in the Book of Job: 28:14, 38:16, 38:30, 41:32, twelve times in the psalms 36:7, 42:8, 104:6 (singular) and 33:7, 71:20, 77:17, 78:15, 106:9, 107:26, 135:6, 148:7 (plural); four times in the Proverbs: 3:20, 8:24, 8:27, 8:28; twice in Isaiah: 51:10, 63:13, three times in Ezekiel: 26:19, 31:4, 31:15, and once each in Amos (7:4), Jonah (2:5) and Habakkuk (3:10). Most of these occurrences are poetic (the majority of them are in the Book of Psalms). The word is often paired with other monstrous creatures of NWS mythology. The meaning of the word is ‘deep’ or ‘the abyss’, referring to a body of (sometimes subterranean) water, which is commonly thought to have certain mythological connotations.

The word is not used to refer to an ordinary physical body of water, and Waschke suggested that it is especially in connection with the Reed Sea motif that

¹²⁹² Batto 2013, 218. He discussed the relationship between *EE* and Gen. 1 in more detail on pp. 232–236, coming to the conclusion that the ubiquity of the combat myth in the ANE (albeit in his argumentation as a “paradigm for creation”, a view that I do not share), it is the aggregate of the motifs in the text that “strongly suggests” that the myth had functioned as the “backdrop or foil” for the composed of the text. It is indeed on the argument from aggregation on which my entire thesis rests.

¹²⁹³ Day 2000, 101.

¹²⁹⁴ Stoltz 1999, 740–741.

the word takes on a cosmogonic role. According to him it was understood mythologically as a world-encircling cosmic ocean and as the primal sea, and that it appears solely in a mythological context. He also asserted that the word is used as a proper name in the HB.¹²⁹⁵ There does not appear to be sufficient textual evidence for the claims. The word is usually understood as the feminine aspect of the primal water due to its Akkadian cognate, but in the HB it appears grammatically both as a feminine and a masculine word.¹²⁹⁶

According to Day, when the word is lacking the feminine suffix, it would suggest that it bears no connection to the Mesopotamian Tiamat.¹²⁹⁷ Reversing the argumentation, one might then suggest that when the word is bearing the feminine suffix it could ostensibly be linked to *EE*. This line of reasoning is insufficient for drawing firm conclusions, but it can certainly be used to re-examine texts in which the word תְּהוֹם appears. The connection between Tiamat and תְּהוֹם has also been questioned by Tsumura, according to whom it is phonologically impossible that the latter was borrowed from the former. According to him, and I agree with his assessment on the matter, they display a common Semitic term.¹²⁹⁸ This of course does not preclude common mythological connotations having been attached to the term, quite the contrary. But the word תְּהוֹם is not the only reason that Gen. has been connected to the Ugaritic myths.

While a cognate of the word *tehôm* can be found in the Ugaritic corpus (*thm/thmt*), there seems to be little to connect Gen. 1:1 to the Combat Myth of the Ugaritic texts either. In fact, to read mortal combat or even conflict into the narrative of Gen. 1:1 seems to require no small amount of imagination. This is not to deny the possible influence of *EE* on the narrative, a matter which has caused no small matter of contention in the past century.¹²⁹⁹ But there seem to be few NWS influences to the narrative,¹³⁰⁰ and the concept of combat is all but vanished,

¹²⁹⁵ Waschke 2004, 574–578

¹²⁹⁶ Waschke 2004, 577.

¹²⁹⁷ Day 2000, 101.

¹²⁹⁸ Tsumura 2005, 42–53. Also Sasson 2008, 497, who argued that because the Babylonian narrative would have been jealously guarded by the Babylonian clergy, the Hebrew mythographers would scarcely have had a chance to inspect it. While the texts themselves may have been proprietary to the priests, the myth itself seems to have been forged as a tool of political propaganda and was likely mediated to the public through ritual drama. The myth could scarcely have been so widely spread had it been solely an elite narrative.

¹²⁹⁹ For recent discussion, see Scurlock & Beal 2013.

¹³⁰⁰ Although the idea of combat is absent from her discussion (and indeed the absence of combat from the creation narrative is the very conclusion to her article, “the last possible vestigial remnant of *Chaoskampf* before creation is extirpated from the narrative while strengthening, and not diminishing, the correspondence between Gen 1:1–2:3 and the *Enūma Eliš*”), the NWS

meaning that the text is of limited use in a survey of texts on the legitimization of Israelite kingship through the Combat Myth. Murtonen suggested that the serpent of Gen. may contain a remnant of the NWS pantheon, basing this on the evidence of Num. 21:9 and 2 Kgs 18:4.¹³⁰¹ While such speculation has been entertained, it must be emphasized that a veritable motif of battle is absent from the narratives found in Gen. 1.

While a connection between the myth and the text of Gen. 1 may be posited, a connection between Gen. 1 and kingship is more difficult to demonstrate. Even if there should be traces of the latter remaining, the information is impossible to extract at present time. Of course, the role of Adam and Eve as a reflection of the royal couple and the beginning of a dynastic line, or Adam as a kind of *Ur-king*, could be entertained, but even such interpretations would be in response to the Exile and Babylonian influences rather than remnants of ‘authentic’ Israelite monarchic tradition. Most mentions of the sea in Gen. are in connection with the flood narrative(s), which likely belong to a mythic tradition that was not originally connected to the Combat Myth.

Of the further examples of the word in the HB, Ps. 33:7 likewise features the word תְּהוֹמוֹת as a parallel for the word sea.

כִּנָּס כִּנְד מִי הַיָּם	33:7	He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap,
נָתַן בְּאוֹצְרוֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת		He lays the deeps in storehouses.

While there are certain mythological connotations in the passage, alluding to a Pre-Ptolemaic or simply a poetic world view in which the natural elements were kept in storage to be unleashed by the divinity. The psalm has been interpreted as an exhortation of a creator god,¹³⁰² but such an interpretation need not affect the reading of this particular passage. Yet there are certain undeniable cosmogonic elements to the passage.¹³⁰³ The vocabulary of the passage mostly finds correspondence in Ugaritic,¹³⁰⁴ as does the parallelism of the sea and the deep, but nothing like the verses or the concepts expressed therein can be found in the Ugaritic corpus.¹³⁰⁵ The dating of the psalm is uncertain, but Loretz & Kottsieper

influences on the text of Gen. 1:2 are discussed by Scurlock 2013a.

¹³⁰¹ Murtonen 1952, 73.

¹³⁰² Craigie 1983a, 271; Briggs & Briggs 1987, 284.

¹³⁰³ Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 94.

¹³⁰⁴ For example, the Ugaritic word *knd*, with the meaning of a vessel or a textile, has been used in trying to decipher the word כִּנְד of the passage. Craigie 1983a, 270; Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 95. The words כִּנְד and אוֹצְרוֹת are both of unclear etymologies. On p. 94 Loretz & Kottsieper suggest that the psalm contains language reminiscent both of Egypt and the Canaanite and Mesopotamian myths of divine combat.

¹³⁰⁵ See Avishur 1994, 249, for discussion of the possible quotations from ‘Canaanite’ literature in

have submitted that the participle forms פָּנֵס and נָתַן suggest that verse 33:7 may contain a quotation from an earlier hymn.¹³⁰⁶

The Combat Myth has been used in the interpretation of the passage. Cooper, for example, suggested that in the passage, Yahweh creates borders for controlling the sea that he had defeated.¹³⁰⁷ Day interpreted it as a demythologised allusion to the divine combat against the sea, in which the sea has been subjugated to the extent that controlling it has become “a job of work” for Yahweh.¹³⁰⁸ Craigie connected the psalm both to the motif of the crossing of the Reed Sea and to the Song of the Sea, which according to him was a transformation of ‘Canaanite’ creation mythology.¹³⁰⁹ If the passage should reference the Combat Myth, it does so in an extremely abstract fashion despite the clearly mythological language. While suggestions of the imprisonment of Yamm have been made with regard to the Ugaritic text KTU 1.83, it is not even clear that Yamm is bound anywhere in the Ugaritic texts. What exactly became of Yamm after Baal had beaten him into a puddle cannot be found in the texts, in spite of valiant efforts to discover his fate.

Bringing the term תְּהוֹמוֹת finally into connection with the monstrous beings slain by Anat, psalm 148:7 features the parallelism of תְּהוֹמוֹת and תַּנִּינִים, the deeps and the ‘sea monsters’, while the sea itself does not feature in the verse. Both words have a cognate in Ugaritic in *thmt* and *tnn*. While the latter features as a monster in the Ugaritic texts and has been interpreted as referring to monsters also in the Biblical text, it is not sufficient evidence to claim that תְּהוֹמוֹת here should necessarily refer to a monstrous being, despite attempts to find a cognate for the word in the Akkadian Tiamat since the days of Gunkel. Waschke, for example, interpreted the word תְּהוֹמוֹת here referring not to a personification of a primal monster, but as the water in which they dwell, which Gunkel had already suggested in 1895.¹³¹⁰

Hutton discussed the Biblical motif of the subjugation of the sea in the

the psalm.

¹³⁰⁶ Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 93–96.

¹³⁰⁷ Cooper 1981, 376. Cf. also Ps. 104:9.

¹³⁰⁸ Day 2000, 100–101.

¹³⁰⁹ Craigie 1983a, 273. Of course, we actually know very little of ‘Canaanite’ creation mythology.

¹³¹⁰ Waschke 2004, 578–580. Tsumura 2005, 36, claims that Gunkel derived the word directly from Tiamat, the “goddess of the primeval ocean of *Enūma Elish*”. Gunkel however did not derive the Hebrew term from the proper name of Tiamat, nor did he claim the two were one and the same. To Gunkel, the Biblical Deep was where the monster(s) of the myth lived, which he saw as quite different from Tiamat’s function in the Babylonian story.

form of Tannin and Rahab.¹³¹¹ Edelman equated the Tannin of Ez. 29:1–6 with the Egyptian pharaoh, suggesting that the term refers here to a “watery monster”. According to her, Tannin is especially associated with Egypt.¹³¹² And indeed, the creature is found “sprawling in the midst of the channels”. It must be pointed out that there’s nothing in particular in the Ugaritic texts to suggest that *tnn* was associated with Egypt.¹³¹³ In fact, even in the Egyptian text P.Hermitage 1116A, the place-name *tnn* is associated with a city or an area in Syria. The terms *thm/thmt*, on other hand, are clearly connected with the tradition of sea monsters, but are not creatures themselves in the NWS traditions.

The תַּנִּינִים (sg. תַּנִּינִי) mentioned in v. 7 of the psalm, translated variously as sea monster, serpent and dragon, appear four times in the Psalter (44:20, 74:13 and 91:13), and 27 times in the HB (of which it occurs six times in Is.¹³¹⁴ and Jer.¹³¹⁵ both). It is usually associated with the word תַּנְיִם (sg. תַּנִּי), translated as jackal. The semantic field of the words suggests a land and sea monster of unspecified type.¹³¹⁶ While according to HALOT (1994), the meaning should be understood as sea monster specifically (and not serpent), the parallelism of תַּנִּי and תַּנְיִם in Ps 91:13 suggests that sometimes they were understood as land-dwelling serpents, as both types are in the verse trampled underfoot. Likewise in an Ugaritic polyglot the term *tnn* has been connected with the Akkadian *bašmu*, the meaning of which is a venomous serpent.¹³¹⁷

Smith & Pitard claimed that *tnn* is not commonly used as a parallel term with the names *ym* and *nhr*.¹³¹⁸ While it is true that Sea and River form a parallel pair that is often found separately from Tannin, the opposite hardly follows. The word for sea especially is found next to or near most of the occurrences of the name Tannin – and not only in Ugaritic literature. Context does appear to offer the best means of interpreting the nature of the beast. The parallelism of the term

¹³¹¹ Hutton 2007, 288.

¹³¹² Edelman 2012, 170; 2014, 81.

¹³¹³ Frayne 2013, 66, attempted to locate Tannin to texts from Early Dynastic Ebla, in which a [d]u-na-nu is featured. Contra Schwemer 2001, 118, who interpreted it as an epithet of Adad. While there is no decisive evidence to tip the scale for either interpretation, it is worth pointing out that there is nothing to suggest that the tradition of the list of monsters, which may have been attached to the epithets of Yamm secondarily in the Baal Cycle, could not be older than the first iterations of the politicized NWS Combat Myth.

¹³¹⁴ 13:22, 27:1, 34:13, 35:7, 43:20, 51:9.

¹³¹⁵ 9:11, 10:22, 14:6, 49:33, 51:34, 51:37.

¹³¹⁶ Klein 1987, 708; BDB 2006, 1072; HALOT 1994, 1764–1765. While it is possible the words originate from different roots, both words refer to monsters, so there exists semantic overlap between them.

¹³¹⁷ Niehr 2004, 329, 727.

¹³¹⁸ Smith & Pitard 2009, 212.

Tannin is curious. In addition to the snake, the Deep, and other monstrous beings, in Ps. 44:20 the word is paralleled by צֶלְמָת, “the shadow of death”, possibly containing a reference or an allusion to Mot. Out of these four, three are cognates to known adversaries of Baal. This cluster of the enemies of the Storm-God is also found in the passage of Canticles I discussed in connection with the Ordeal by River.

Niehr has pointed out that the verbs of destruction such as שבר (in Ps. 74:13) and רָמַס (91:13) are often used in connection with the Biblical תַּנִּין.¹³¹⁹ While in the Ugaritic texts, *tnn* usually appears in the singular, in the Biblical texts the beings usually feature in the plural. Perhaps for this reason, Widengren suggested that the serpentine tannin-monsters of the HB should be understood as the companions of the primal monster symbolized by the dragon, and that Tannin was the proper name of the leader of these tannin-monsters.¹³²⁰ This is pure speculation. There are certainly points of connection between Ps. 148 and the Ugaritic texts, and they are not limited to the shared vocabulary. What is noticeable about Psalm 148 is that it features not only items of vocabulary that we find in the Ugaritic texts, but a lot terminology that we find specifically in the Ugaritic god-lists (e.g. KTU 1.47, 1.118, 1.148 featuring the so-called ‘canonical’ list).

Beings from the god-lists include the ‘heavens’ of v. 1, ‘sun’, ‘moon’ and ‘stars’ or v. 3, the ‘waters’ of v. 4, the ‘deeps’ of v. 7, the ‘mountains’ or v. 9. Like the Ugaritic god-lists, the psalm seems to describe the universe on a vertical axis. In fact, the order of the creatures that begin from the heavens and heights of v. 1 and follow all the way to the youths of v. 12 in a vertical descent of importance seems to recall the god-lists. The Pre-Ptolemaic world order (the idea of the world as a disc upon a world ocean) is made explicit in the mention of the “waters that are above the heavens”, mentioned in v. 4. There could also be a vague allusion to the Ashtar-episode of KTU 1.6. I 53–65, in which Ashtar descends the throne of Baal to rule over ‘all the great earth’ in v. 11, which makes mention of the kings of the earth (מְלִכֵי-אֶרֶץ), the princes (שָׂרִים), and all the judges of the earth (שֹׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ), all of whom have been asked to praise Yahweh in v. 7. The psalm is also relatively short, and could be either archaic or archaïcising.¹³²¹ What is noticeably absent

¹³¹⁹ Niehr 2004, 329.

¹³²⁰ Widengren 1958, 171.

¹³²¹ According to Spieckermann 1989, 52–57, verses 1 and 14 form an editorial layer and verses 4–

from the psalm, which mentions a host of dignitaries in v. 11, are the words El and Baal. The repetition of the הֵלֵלֵיהֶוָה-formula in the psalm suggests that it may once have been sung or orally recited.¹³²² In spite of the mentioning of the מֶלֶךְ-אֶרֶץ in v. 11, the theme of the kingship of Yahweh does not explicitly feature in the psalm.

One of the most famous references to the list of monsters in the Biblical texts is in Is. 51, which has often been considered the most striking parallel between the Biblical and Ugaritic texts. But this list is by far not the only trace of the mythology in the book. Most of the references seem to bear more similarity to the NWS tradition, but some may also owe influence to the hybrid Babylonian myth and the Exodus traditions. The sea is mentioned 29 times in the Book of Isaiah.¹³²³ Many of the Isaiahic passages have been classically read in the context of the Storm-God's battle with the sea. The text of Isaiah contains material from vastly different times, the dating of the passages ranging from the Pre-Exilic to Post-Exilic times.¹³²⁴ But as Day noted, some of the most striking resemblances between Biblical and Ugaritic texts are to be found in the younger parts of Isaiah, and the presence of vocabulary of motifs familiar from the Ugaritic corpus is not necessarily an indication of the antiquity of the texts,¹³²⁵ while the traditions contained in the texts themselves may be considerably older.

The couplet of Is. 51:9–10 has long been connected with the realm of ANE myths, the mythological provenance of which has been supported by the naming of several mythical monsters in the verses.¹³²⁶ In these names we find specific lexical parallels and cognate terms shared by the Biblical and the Ugaritic corpus.¹³²⁷ The couplet is found in Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40–55), but it does not

6 consist of a later redactional insertion. Contra Marttila 2006a, 166, who sees no compelling reason to consider the verses secondary. Marttila however sees the Priestly Code as older than the psalm because the vocabulary of Gen. 1 is repeated throughout the psalm. Shared lexical items would seem to suggest a connection between the texts, but it does not resolve the question of which one possesses the most antiquity.

¹³²² Flint 1998, 466–467, discussed the possibility of the term being a post-script/super-script, having been used in connecting texts together.

¹³²³ For previous scholarship on Isaiah, see Blenkinsopp 2000, 83–92. The final redaction of the book is dated to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.

¹³²⁴ Müller 2014, 259, suggests that at least some portions of the text of Isaiah could go back to the actual prophet in the late 8th century, although he makes no assertions of the texts having been written by the hand of the prophet.

¹³²⁵ Day 1985, 142. “Quite often the parallels are in relatively late texts”.

¹³²⁶ E.g. Watts 1987, 211; Hutton 2007, 285. Wyatt 1996, 94, calls it “one of the great dragon-slaying passages of the Bible”.

¹³²⁷ Hutton 2007, 271.

feature in the sections that are considered later additions.¹³²⁸ In the following paragraphs I examine the couplet as we find it in the Masoretic text, the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran, the Septuagint, and in the Latin Vulgate, reserving special attention to the gender of the verbal forms used in these sources. The purpose of the exercise is to see whether through this examination we can glean new insights into the background of the verses.

Gitay posed the question of whether Deutero-Isaiah ought to be considered an originally written composition, or regarded as an oral composition that found its written form later on, which may have bearing on our understanding of the book's structure. In the latter case the possibly formulaic prophesies or brief utterances of Deutero-Isaiah may have been given independently of one another. They may indeed have initially been jotted down as mere catchwords, which either the collector of the words/phrases, or a completely independent author, would have fleshed out at a later time, and which would have been arranged according to either stylistic or literary criteria. In either case, the fact that the passages awarded to Deutero-Isaiah seem to consist of short independent units¹³²⁹ makes it easier to remove the couplet from its current context and examine it independently.¹³³⁰

The text of Is. 51:9–10 as it is preserved in the Masoretic text contains several allusions to creatures thought to be mythological in nature:

עוֹרִי עוֹרִי לְבִשִׁי־עוֹלָם זָרוֹעַ יְהוָה Awake, awake! Put on strength, *O arm of Yahweh!*
 עוֹרִי כִימֵי קָדֶם Awake as in the days of old,
 דְּרוֹת עוֹלָמִים the generations of ancient times!

הֲלוֹא אַתָּה־הִיא הַמַּחַצֶּבֶת רַהַב Are you not the striker/cutter of *Rahab*,
 מַחֲלֹלֶת תַּנִּין the piercer of *Tannin*?

הֲלוֹא אַתָּה־הִיא הַמַּחְרֶבֶת יָם Are you not the drier of *Yamm*,
 מִי תְהוֹם רַבָּה the water of the *Great Deep*¹³³¹?

הַשֹּׁמֵה מַעְמְקֵי־יָם Who made *the depths of the sea*
 דֶּרֶךְ לְעֶבֶר גְּאוּלָּים a way for the redeemed to cross over?

The verses have traditionally been interpreted as representing tumult and the chaotic forces subdued or conquered by Yahweh, in the context of his theophany

¹³²⁸ Laato 1990, 210.

¹³²⁹ Laato 1990, 207.

¹³³⁰ Gitay 1980, 185–187. Gitay refers to a Greek and Roman custom of taking notes and making summaries of oral performances, whether by a listener or the orator himself. According to him it would explain the stylized and formulaic manner of the prophetic utterances. Such might also be explained by the use of ANE prophetic jargon.

¹³³¹ Wyatt 1996, 94, suggests “Mistress Deep”. The term רַבָּה certainly seems to recall NWS epithets.

as a divine warrior.¹³³² For example, according to Wilson the passage both recalls the Song of the Sea and “explicitly utilizes West Semitic mythological motifs”.¹³³³ Noticeable is the mention of the arm of Yahweh, which could here easily be interpreted as a reference to the divine weapon. It is the arm of Yahweh, the weapon, which is here called the ‘cutter of Rahab’ and ‘the piercer of Tannin’, the parallelism making a strong case for understanding the arm as an actual weapon in the passage. The request that the arm of Yahweh ‘Awake!’ is also curious, functioning almost as a kind of cultic activation of the divine weapon. I previously mentioned the command to awake in the context of the poetic fragment in Canticles, where the verb was connected with a tree – a possible symbol of the Storm-God’s lightning weapon.

Rüterswörden believed that it was important to know the origin of the name to understand what type of creature the texts are referring. He viewed Rahab as an Exilic creation and saw the background of the name to have Babylonian rather than Egyptian origins.¹³³⁴ As discussed previously, Tehôm (the deep or the primal sea), has often been associated with the serpent.¹³³⁵ While a Babylonian antecedent has been suggested for Tehôm in *tâmtum*¹³³⁶ – although a reference to the Egyptian “*t3-mḥw*”, meaning the Delta, may be considered on at least on some occasions – and the Rahab of this couplet has been traditionally connected with Egypt, it is the discovery of the Ugaritic corpus that has established the closest parallels for the sequence of these creatures in NWS literature.

The context of a Pre-Exilic autumnal festival has also been suggested for Is. 40–55.¹³³⁷ The Isaiahic couplet may well be Exilic, the text making use of older local traditions of the NWS Combat Myth in a new, altered context. Ginsberg, for his part, believed that Deutero-Isaiah had been influenced by the psalms or psalm literature here, mentioning the same lexical and semantic elements as found in the above passage. He seemed not yet aware of the parallel materials from Ugaritic literature.¹³³⁸ He did however pose the still valid question

¹³³² Laato 1990, 219, 227–228.

¹³³³ Wilson 2014, 142.

¹³³⁴ Rüterswörden 2004, 355. Although on p. 354 he also discussed the possibility of the name having an Egyptian etymology.

¹³³⁵ Stoltz 1999, 737.

¹³³⁶ Wyatt 1996, 92.

¹³³⁷ See Laato 1990, 207.

¹³³⁸ But in Ginsberg’s defence, Laato 1990, writing 30 years later makes no notice of it either, even though he incidentally calls attention to several characteristics shared by Isaiahic and Ugaritic poetry (pp. 208–228).

of which ought to be considered the prius here, a hymnic celebration of Yahweh's exploits against the primeval monsters, or an appeal for him to display "like prowess in redeeming Israel from the Babylonian captivity".¹³³⁹

One of most curious aspects of the Isaiahic verses is the preservation of the feminine participle form, which Hutton called the "concomitant subversion of the gender reference" from an original female deity to Yahweh.¹³⁴⁰ In its extant context the feminine verbal form is explained by reference to the hand of Yahweh, mentioned at the beginning of verse 51:9, which is fitting as a possible reference to the divine weapon of the Storm-God. But might there be other explanations for the gender of the verbal forms?

At Qumran, Isaiah seems to have been one of the more popular texts. The Great Isaiah scroll has also preserved almost the entirety of the text of the Book of Isaiah. 1QIsa^{a+b} Col. XLII, 24–25 reads:

¹³⁴¹ הלוֹא הִיאָה אֶתִּי הַמּוֹחֶצֶת רַחַב־ Are you¹³⁴⁴ not she, the crusher/divider of Rahab,
¹³⁴² מִחַלְלֵת [תַּנִּין] the wounder of Tannin? //
 יִם ¹³⁴³ הלוֹא הִיאָה אֶתִּי הַמְּחַרֶּבֶת הַיָּם Are you not she, the dryer of the Sea,
 מִי תְהוֹם רַבָּא the water of the great Tehom

The feminine agent that is being addressed in the Qumranic passage is again the arm of Yahweh. It bears observing that here the feminine forms have not been preserved accidentally. On row 25 a yod has indeed been added as a feminine marker to the personal pronoun, a peculiarity of Qumranic Hebrew. The verbal form *הַמּוֹחֶצֶת* ("the smiter") in the first colon has also often been used to correct the MT's somewhat confusing *hapax legomenon* הַמְּחַצֵּבֶת (often translated as "the piercer"),¹³⁴⁵ which according to Wyatt may be an amalgamation of *מַחֵצ* and *הַצֵּב*.¹³⁴⁶

The Septuagint version of the textual unit is the shortest overall:

(οὐ σὺ εἶ) ἡ ἐρημοῦσα θάλασσαν (Are you not) the desolatress¹³⁴⁷ of the Sea,
 ὕδωρ ἀβύσσου πλῆθος the great water of the Abyss?

¹³³⁹ Ginsberg 1958, 152–153.

¹³⁴⁰ Hutton 2007, 291.

¹³⁴¹ The *wav* in Rahab does not necessarily have any bearing on the pronunciation of the word, as *wav* could stand in for any vowel in the Qumranic script (but it could add some weight to my suggestion that the monster held a connection to the locale of Rehov). The use of *ן* instead of the MT *ה* does however call the interpretation into question. On Rahab and Tannin in the Qumran version, see Hutton 2007, 280.

¹³⁴² The end of the line is unclear, but comparison with the *תְּהוֹם* that appears later on in the same line makes it unlikely that the last character would be *ם*, as suggested.

¹³⁴³ Or *הַמְּחַרֶּכֶת*, "the catcher".

¹³⁴⁴ The last character(s) of the word resemble the first character of the following word, and could therefore read *אתה*.

¹³⁴⁵ See Hutton 2007, 280, 288.

¹³⁴⁶ "Congeneric assimilation". Wyatt 1996, 93. Also Hutton 2007, 289.

¹³⁴⁷ Translating a fem. aor. active participle.

The LXX feminine participle form does not refer to the arm of Yahweh, but refers to the city of Jerusalem (Ιερουσαλημ), mentioned in verse 9. According to Hutton, the differing versions of verse 9 show evidence of theological reworking.¹³⁴⁸ What is noteworthy is that the entire latter half of verse 9 mentioning Rahab is missing from the LXX version. The Septuagint example is the most skeletal, which would suggest that either the latter half of verse 9 was left out from the LXX text, or things have been added to the other textual traditions later on.

If the LXX version should represent the eldest Biblical tradition available to us, the addition of material to the later versions could perhaps be explained by means of motif attraction. The LXX version seems so skeletal, in fact, that connecting it with any Ugaritic precedent would be difficult without the help of the Masoretic text. But one plausible reason for the omission of the latter half of verse 9 may also be found from the realm of the political. If Rahab was interpreted or associated with Egypt already in the time of the writing of the LXX, the authors in the Egyptian community may have felt it prudent to leave out a mention of the crushing of Egypt. The main reason for associating the name Rahab with Egypt may in fact come from Is. 30:7.

While the Vulgate version does not shed much light on the issue of gender in the verses, especially as the referent forearm of the Lord (*brachium Domini*) in it is neuter in form, it may help elucidate some other peculiarities in them.

<i>Numquid non tu percussisti superbum,</i>	Did you not strike/pierce the
<i>vulnerasti draconem</i>	proud/insolent/great one, wound the dragon?
<i>Numquid non tu siccasti¹³⁴⁹ mare,</i>	Did you not dry up the sea,
<i>aquam abyssi vehementis</i>	the water of the vehement/furious abyss?

The first of these concerns the verb *percussare* in verse 9, which may also offer support to the originality of the Qumranic rendering of המוחצת. The more important difference is in the name of Rahab which, as already stated, is not known from any extra-Biblical sources,¹³⁵⁰ is in the verse rendered not by the proper name, but by the term ‘suberbum’. The use of this term in connection with an apparent sea monster is reminiscent of the Ugaritic title *rbm*.

It is not entirely clear whether we ought to understand the Hebrew Rahab as a name at all, as alternative suggestions have been made for the interpretation

¹³⁴⁸ Hutton 2007, 279.

¹³⁴⁹ One has to wonder whether the verb *sicare* used here held any connotations of the verb *sicare/secare*, the meaning of which is to cut up, cut apart; or even to *sica*, a sword, forming a word-play containing both the meanings of drying up and piercing.

¹³⁵⁰ Day 1985, 6; Day 2000, 99; Ringgren 1990, 93.

of the root רחב. The root exists in several Semitic languages, but there is no cognate for the name.¹³⁵¹ If we were to understand “rahab” as an epithet referring to the haughty or the proud one as the Vulgate seems to suggest, it may serve as an analogue to Yamm, paralleled by the following verse. Traditionally the name has been interpreted as alluding to an Egyptian pharaoh. Along with Rahab, Leviathan and Behemoth have also been connected to Egyptian imagery, especially due to a persistent iconographic motif of the pharaoh spearing a crocodile and a hippopotamus.¹³⁵² According to Day, however, nothing in the text indicates that they function solely as symbolic references to foreign lands.¹³⁵³

If the hypothesis I have presented on the names of the monstrous adversaries of the Storm-God corresponding to water courses should hold true, the meaning of the name Rahab ought to be sought in bodies of water. As the only one of the monstrous names in the Biblical list of creatures that we cannot find a correspondent for in the Ugaritic texts, it suggests that the name should refer to some local body of water in the area of Palestine. Rahab resembles no name of the Dead Sea nor the River Jordan that the author can conceive of, but Mazar discussed the shifting of the tectonic plates near Rehov having resulted in the draining of a lake by the town into the Jordan River, meaning that there was a lake that once existed in the vicinity of Rehov. The connection of the name Rahab to this lake may be considered.¹³⁵⁴

On the other hand, the connection of the name with Egypt is well attested, so a possible connection to the Nile may likewise be entertained. Norin suggested an etymology for the term from the Egyptian *rꜥ ḥꜥb*, ‘the crooked serpent’.¹³⁵⁵ An alternative suggestion might be *r-ḥꜥp* with the meaning of ‘the serpent Nile’.¹³⁵⁶

¹³⁵¹ See HALOT 1996, 1192–1193; Rüterswörden 2004, 352; BDB 2006, 355.

¹³⁵² Patton 2001, 151.

¹³⁵³ Day 2000, 103.

¹³⁵⁴ Mazar 2003. Petrovich 2013, 288, connects the רחובות of Gen. 10:11 with one of the major cities of the Assyrian heartland, so an association with Rahab and the Neo-Assyrian Empire might also be considered.

¹³⁵⁵ Norin 1977, 74. It is likely that Norin’s *rꜥ* is an erroneous transcription of *r* (rendered ‘re’ and translated as ‘serpent, reptile’ by Wallis Budge 1920), with the variant *irt*, as *rꜥ* has no known meaning of serpent. The reduplicated *rr* or *rrk* may also have functioned as a byname of Apep. According to Borghouts, 2007: 21, “Rerek is a chimera of Netherworld lore, not an existing species”, indicating an especially mythological connotation for the term.

¹³⁵⁶ The term *r-ḥꜥp* without the determinative for serpent actually has the meaning of “mouth of the Nile-god or of his river”, so it is not a mere imaginary construct. While the Egyptian *ḥ* is usually rendered as *h* in Hebrew, as discussed previously, there is some discrepancy in the use of *h* and *ḥ* in the name Rahab. Note Lipiński’s observation that in Semitic languages a post-positive determinant *-b* can be used to qualify the grammatical gender of wild and dangerous animals, which would explain the shift from *p* to *b* in this instance, the rounding out of the sound increasing the perceived monstrosity of the creature. Wallis Budge 1920, xlv; Hoffmeier

Rahab, as the name for the Nile, as a metaphor of the hostile political entity, represented by its main water course and cast as an actor in the Combat Myth akin to other major water courses of the Eastern Mediterranean area would offer an explanation for the etymology of the term, as well as its puzzling connection with Egypt. Of course, attempts have been made to derive the name from Akkadian sources, such as the labbu-demon, but in the Biblical texts the name seems to have no bearing on the Mesopotamian area.¹³⁵⁷

The Ugaritic passage KTU 1.3 III 38–42 contains a wealth of the same vocabulary that we find in Isaiah, much of which consists of *rare* lexical items, and the rather uncommon word-pair of twisting and fleeing (*bariah* – *ʿqallatôn*) can be found nowhere else in the HB but in Isaiah.¹³⁵⁸ While the Ugaritic and Isaiahic texts share obvious lexical and syntactical elements, it still bears pointing out that this does not necessitate a *genetic* or *directly dependent* literary relationship between the texts.¹³⁵⁹ Most likely these texts are perusing the same tradition, which displayed naturally differing variants at different geographic locations. According to Smith & Pitard, there is a mantic or incantational subtext to the exchange between Baal and Anat in KTU 1.3,¹³⁶⁰ and it may well be that one of the contexts in which the above couplets were used was in incantation, as I intend to demonstrate further on.

While there is no mention of Leviathan or Lotan in Is. 51:9–10, both it and the fleeing and twisting serpents are actually also mentioned in another part of the Book of Isaiah, namely in 27:1, indicating that the text of Isaiah also contained variant traditions of the list – like the Baal Cycle itself already did in the LBA. In addition to Isaiah and Ps. 74, the name Leviathan is also mentioned in a rather different context in Ps. 104:25–26 and Job 3:8, 41:1, which I have discussed elsewhere, the texts of which may also contain traces of the list of monsters in the HB. The Proto-Isaiahic verse of 27:1 displays a similar mythical provenance as the Deutero-Isaiahic verses, and may well have attracted the motif and resulted in the addition of the latter.¹³⁶¹

1999, 182; Lipiński 2011, 94.

¹³⁵⁷ Lambert 2013, 362: “It is possible, if nothing more, that an ancient name whose origin was already lost in the ancient world was interpreted and modified by both the Hebrews and the Babylonians”.

¹³⁵⁸ The study of fixed pairs in Ugaritic has actually served to remove several obscurities from Isaiah over the years. Watson 1972, 466–467.

¹³⁵⁹ Hutton 2007, 290.

¹³⁶⁰ Smith & Pitard 2009, 232.

¹³⁶¹ Ginsberg 1958, 152, also held that the diction of Deutero-Isaiah had been profoundly

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְקֹד יְהוָה On that day Yahweh took punishment
 בְּחַרְבּוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְדוֹלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה with his sword, (which is) hard and big and sharp,¹³⁶²
 עַל לֵוְיָתָן נָחֵשׁ בָּרֶחַ on Leviathan, the fleeing serpent,
 וְעַל לֵוְיָתָן נֹחֵשׁ עֲקָלְתָּוִן and on Leviathan, the twisting serpent,
 וַתִּכְרַג אֶת־הַתַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם and he slew the Tannin that is in the Sea.

It is possible, and in light of the Ugaritic traditions even likely, that the first two stiches do not originally belong with the latter three. “On that day” (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) is a prophetic formula repeated throughout the book, and may as such a part of the editorial layer of the verse. The words for punishment and sword share overlapping semantic categories, and it is their combination that may have invited the tricolon of mythic monsters to their vicinity, and support the interpretation of Yahweh’s hand as his divine weapon in 51:9, where it has the same *function* as the sword of Yahweh does in this verse. But note that while the sword and the arm of Yahweh seems to share a function and that both of these references to the divine weapon seem to have attracted the motif of the list of monsters, the list of monsters seems to have circulated independently of the weapon motif. As I have suggested, the list is connected with the Combat Myth only coincidentally.

It seems that it is with the examination of Is. 51:9–10 and 27:1 side by side that we find the most striking resemblance to the Ugaritic cola. The question is not whether the Isaiahic author(s) employed couplets known from the broad NWS literature, of which the Ugaritic texts serve as an example – but in what way and intent they did so. While the Isaiahic authors may have employed some literary techniques¹³⁶³ that would not have been employed by the Ugaritic scribes, either because of the chronological distance between the texts or because we have been left with a very selective example of ancient NWS literature, it is difficult to believe that the purpose of the Isaiahic authors in ‘appropriating’ or employing phrases from this ‘Canaanite’ literature, as many believe, would have been the mockery of it.¹³⁶⁴ One would be hard-pressed to find any mockery in the verses, the function of which seems to be *exaltation*, whether of Yahweh or of one of his divine attributes.¹³⁶⁵

What remains noticeable about Is. 27:1 is that unlike the other examples of

influenced by Proto-Isaiah. There are other references to Ugaritic literature in Proto-Isaiah, the foremost among them to the Ashtar-myth. See Heiser 2001.

¹³⁶² I agree with Wyatt 1996, 97, in that the colon seems “doubtless overloaded”. Perhaps the beginning of the verse should read “with his sword and his bow”.

¹³⁶³ Watson 1972, 466–467.

¹³⁶⁴ E.g. Hutton 2007, 301.

¹³⁶⁵ Also Kloos 1986, 103, “As to the supposed sarcasm, we have seen above that the adherents of the ‘polemics’ theory are apt to impose meanings upon the text which the unbiased eye is unable to detect”.

this list, it either preserves an original masculine gender, or has had one carefully worked into it.¹³⁶⁶ It is commonly held that the above Ugaritic passages tell the story of Baal's (and by association, Anat's) defeating the monsters of chaos,¹³⁶⁷ in spite of the fact that the text where Anat herself boasts her defeat the creatures is by far the more famous of the Ugaritic references,¹³⁶⁸ and likely the more original of the traditions. Suggestions have been made that the couplets may originally have belonged to a hymn celebrating the goddess Anat, and may only secondarily have found their way to the text of the Baal Cycle,¹³⁶⁹ perhaps once more by means of motif attraction. My hypothesis is that the list of geographic information circulated via poetry contained traditions of different local myths of divine combat because each one of these major earth formations in the area was the location of the local battle between the Storm-God and his adversary. The list was then added to the Baal Cycle because awarding the defeat of all of these regional monsters to the Baal of the Baal Cycle served to increase his stature among the baals. The same reason is why it was attached to Isaiah: the exaltation of the divinity.

The Leviathan of the Isaiahic and Ugaritic lists is further mentioned in a famous passage in Job 41:1–8, although in the Joban passage it is not connected explicitly with the sea, but is rather contrasted with another monster, Behemoth (mentioned in the previous chapter, Job 40).¹³⁷⁰

תִּמְשֹׁךְ לִוְיָתָן בַּחֲבֵרָה וּבְחֶבֶל תִּשְׁקִיעַ לְשׁוֹנוֹ:	Can you draw out <i>Leviathan</i> with a hook? and with a cord can you sink his tongue?
הֲתִשֶּׂם אֶגְמוֹן בְּאַפּוֹ וּבְחֹרֶת תִּקְוֶה לְחַיֵּי:	Can you set a rope/bulrush in his nostrils? and with a thorn bore through his jaw?
הֲיִרְבֶּה אֱלֹהֵי תַּחֲנוּגִים אִם־יְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהֵי רַחֲוִית:	Will he increase his supplications to you? or will he speak to you softly?

¹³⁶⁶ The complicated tense-syntax employed here does not seem to exist in other Semitic languages, and certainly not in Ugaritic. Bergsträsser 1995, §3/1.2.2.1. Unlike all the other examples the Proto-Isaiahic verse also does not employ the list format, but actually repeats one list item twice.

¹³⁶⁷ Patton 2001, 152.

¹³⁶⁸ The passage has sometimes been read in the second person masculine, but on account of the following prefixed verbal forms referring to Anat, this has remained a minority view. Wyatt 2005, 21, is correct in pointing out that the primary question of the interpretation of the passage has to do with verbal forms. Where I take issue with Wyatt's reading is in the easy equation he makes between the defeating of Yamm and of the other creatures of the passage, as though the creatures were one and the same. While I the creatures may exemplify variant traditions of the Combat Myth, Yamm, the Mediterranean Sea, was the element subjugated by the Storm-God of Aleppo, and it is solely to bolster the battle between the two, to add to the victory of Baal, that the list of these other monsters have been added to the mention of the name of Yamm in the text, as the greater the power of Yamm, the greater the glory of Baal.

¹³⁶⁹ Smith 1994b, f12, "these lines belong to a passage which appears to have been redacted secondarily into the extant version of the cycle".

¹³⁷⁰ The Ugaritic texts were discussed in connection with the Book of Job extensively by Weiser 1951. The possible Ugaritic influences to the book were discussed by De Moor 1994.

הִיכַרְתָּ בְרִית עִמָּךְ Will he make a covenant with you?
 תִּקְחֵנִי לְעַבְדְּ עוֹלָם: Will you accept him as a servant forever?

הִתְשַׁחֲקֶיבוּ בַצֶּפֶר Will you play with him as with a bird?
 וְתִקְשְׁרֵנִי לְנַעֲרוֹתַיִד: or bind him for your young women?

יִכְרוּ עָלָיו חֲבֵרִים Will the trade partners banquet over him?
 וְתִצְיֵהוּ בֵּין כְּנַעֲנִים: Will he be divided among the merchants?

תִּמְלֵא בְשָׁפוֹת עוֹרֶךְ Will you fill up with spears his skin?
 וּבְצִלְצֵל דָּגִים רֹאשׁוֹ: or with harpoons of fish his head?

שִׁים-עָלָיו כַּפֶּד *Set your palm over him,*
 זָכֵר מִלְחָמָה אֶל-תּוֹסֶף: remember the war, do not repeat it!

In contrast to other mentions of Leviathan in the HB, in the Joban passage the monster stands alone. The passage is not an example of the monster-list format. With regard to the Amorite traditions, the mention of covenant and the term ‘servant’, which was used as term for vassal king, are of interest. But the banqueting on the corpse of the monster and its division among the merchants is reminiscent of the hybrid Babylonian tradition. De Moor dated the oldest parts of the book – the Leviathan passage the foremost among them – to the LBA, acknowledging that centuries of redaction preceded its inclusion in the HB.¹³⁷¹ However, the text does not seem to reflect the LBA text examples pertaining to the monstrous creatures particularly well, so the presence of the name of Leviathan alone can scarcely be used to date the passage. While some of the vocabulary seems to reference the traditions discussed in this study, there does not appear to be an explicit connection between the text and kingship.

In the Babylonian Talmud, Leviathan seems to be associated with the Dead Sea, as in *b. Bat. 74b* it is stated that the Jordan River rushes into the “mouth of Leviathan”, offering support to my hypothesis of the bodies of water represented by monstrous creatures also on the area of ancient Palestine. In Midrash Rabbah Ex. 24:1 the sea is called Prince Sea (שַׁר שֶׁל יָם) which, rather than being a collection of originally mythological material, may be a *re-mythologization* of the narrative. This view was opposed by Kloos, who felt that the Midrash shows a wavering between the anthropomorphic deity and the literal sea by stating that Yahweh dried up the prince of the sea. Kloos insisted that the sea was dried up in the Ugaritic texts and that this was therefore an original aspect of the myth, basing much of her argumentation on a very uncertain translation of *yšt*, which is featured in the text only once (KTU 1.2 IV 27) and directly before break in the

¹³⁷¹ De Moor 1994, 239–242. His main argument for the book’s Pre-Exilic redaction is the lack of Greek and Persian loan words.

text.¹³⁷² In the Baal Cycle, Baal defeats Yamm with his weapons, not by drying him up, regardless of the meaning of the verb *yšt*.

Hutton suggested that we may be able to piece together something that he titled the **Hymn of Anat**, using these passages from Isaiah, Pss. 74:13–15, 89:10–11,¹³⁷³ and Ugaritic literature. His reconstruction of a hypothetical Hymn of Anat, which he proposes would have been popular even down to the Israelite times,¹³⁷⁴ would have taken a form the like of:

(ha)la (atti) maḥaṣṭi rahab Did you not strike Rahab?
 (ha)la (atti) ḥalalti tannin Did you not pierce Tannin?¹³⁷⁵
 (ha)la (atti) kallalti naḥas bariaḥ Did you not put an end to the fleeing serpent?
 (ha)la (atti) šabbarti lotan aqallatan Did you not crush the twisting Lotan

His formula for the proposed hymn seems somewhat unlikely, as none of the extant texts follow either the tattoo rhythm or the rigid metre of his reconstruction.¹³⁷⁶ And furthermore, one has to wonder what the function of such a string of rhetorical questions addressed directly to the goddess would have been.¹³⁷⁷ While it remains unclear to us who exactly the smiter of Rahab and the slayer of Leviathan was, the goddess responsible for the acts in Hutton's reconstruction should hardly be in need of a reminder from the cultic functionaries.¹³⁷⁸ Surely the addressee of the hypothetical hymnic tradition knew that they were the performer of the feats, and it was the audience that needed the reminder.

But even though the traditions seem entwined with the character of Anat, was the goddess Anat ultimately the vanquisher of the foes, or merely the rubric under which the list was collected? Whether the use of the list of monstrous

¹³⁷² Kloos 1986, 208.

¹³⁷³ Hutton 2007, 274, suggests that the passages show attempts of mainstream Yahwism to subvert “contemporary Canaanite literature through their reuse of a Canaanite hymn for a specifically Yahwistic purpose”.

¹³⁷⁴ It was “still circulating in the Israelite theological milieu” according to Hutton 2007, 274, 289.

¹³⁷⁵ Hutton 2007, 293, reconstructed only the first two lines. Why he should have chosen as his first example Rahab, the only one of the monstrous creatures that is famously unknown from sources other than the Biblical, seems somewhat peculiar. As Rahab is not known from the Ugaritic texts, there can exist no textual connection between Rahab and *Yamm*, even if the Sea parallels Rahab in Biblical texts.

¹³⁷⁶ Hutton's reconstruction seems to follow a fairly simple list-like and unpoetic form a¹-b¹-c¹, a¹-b²-c², a¹-b³-c³, whereas the extant Isaiahic and Ugaritic texts seem to employ the poetic form of the so-called ballast variant, a¹-b¹-c¹ / b²-C, where the lengthened C balances the dropped a¹. O'Callaghan 1954, 172.

¹³⁷⁷ Notarius 2012, 196, pointed out that the 𐎗𐎟 particle, related to the Ugaritic *hl*, is not necessarily interrogative in nature but can also have asseverative or representative connotations.

¹³⁷⁸ Hutton 2007, 290. Gitay 1980, 196–197, however, has a valid case for why rhetorical questions from a prophet to a participating audience might have served an emphatic function. But one would imagine they would have been presented in the third person, “Was she/he not the one...?”

creatures, which I have suggested correspond with rivers, was a conscious ideological statement by the Biblical authors is in many cases impossible to determine, but certainly the focus of the texts is in the universal kingship of Yahweh. Indeed, symbolic geography is where mythology and political ideology come together in the ancient texts. Hutton does seem correct in pointing out that the original context of the couplets was probably not as a self-congratulatory anthem engaged in a longer narrative, such that we find in the Baal Cycle and the Isaiahic text, but has only secondarily found its way in their current contexts.¹³⁷⁹

It is extremely difficult to know whether all the names comprised a list *originally*, or whether names were accumulated over time. There also seems to be no one-to-one correspondence in either the names or the functions of the creatures in the Ugaritic list and in the list of Tiamat's helpers, at least outside of the framework I have proposed. Furthermore, nowhere in the Ugaritic texts can we find the creatures of the list designated as Yamm's helpers, an often repeated suggestion that seems to have little textual basis.¹³⁸⁰ Yamm's actual, textually attested helpers are called *mlak ym*, *t' dt tpt nhr* (e.g. KTU 1.2 I 28, 1.2 II 30), "the messengers of Yamm, the legation of Judge River", ostensibly two in number, as Ugaritic messenger deities were wont to be. A messenger or an aid may also be meant by the term and *glmm* (KTU 1.2 II 13) or *glm ym* (KTU 1.14 I 19), "youth(s) of Yamm". It does not seem that Yamm's unnamed helpers were different from the helper deities of other Ugaritic gods, other than in their less than cordial attitude. Yamm in fact advises them against showing respect at the assembly of the gods (KTU 1.2 I 14–15).

The relationship of Anat's foes to Tiamat's creatures is also one of an unresolved nature, although in this chapter I suggested a solution to the question is the found in the Babylonian *mappa mundi*. A connection between the lists of monsters had occasionally been suggested, but no sufficient relationship between them has been demonstrated. It is possible that in both traditions we are dealing with the so-called *ilani kamûti*, the defeated or vanquished gods, banished beneath the earth by their victor, which probably ultimately owe their significance to defeated nations. Burkert however saw the number seven as significant when it

¹³⁷⁹ Hutton 2007, 291.

¹³⁸⁰ E.g. del Olmo Lete 2014, 52, describes the primordial serpents as "'Dragon(s)" helping *ym* in his fight against *b'l*".

comes to these creatures,¹³⁸¹ and the number of names in the Ugaritic passage is nine. It is possible to get seven out of the Ugaritic list if we consider Yamm and Nahar one being of two names, which seems reasonable, and if we either consider *tnn* an additional name of Yamm's – which seems poorly supported by textual evidence, but has been advocated by some¹³⁸² – or consider “the Potentate, that of seven heads” (*šlyt.d.š'bt.rašm*) as the parallel or additional name of “the Twisty serpent” (*bṭn. 'qltn*).

The potentate with seven heads has often been connected with the Ugaritic *ltn* and the Biblical Leviathan, who is described as a creature of multiple heads on the basis of Psalm 74:14, where Yahweh is indicated to have crushed (רָצַץ from רָצַץ) the multiple heads of Leviathan.¹³⁸³ This has often been connected with the “potentate of seven heads” of, e.g. KTU 1.5 I 27–30.¹³⁸⁴ The battle against Leviathan has been seen as one of the characteristics shared by Yahweh and the NWS storm-god Baal, albeit it is not certain that it was Baal that fought Lotan in the Ugaritic mythos.¹³⁸⁵ According to Widengren, the *locus classicus* of Yahweh's battle with the dragon can be found in Ps. 74. He also claimed that Leviathan was the best known name for this adversary of Yahweh.¹³⁸⁶ What however is unclear is Lotan/Leviathan's connection to Yamm. While their immediate association should be called into question, it is still worth noting that the name Leviathan is paralleled by the sea in both Pss. 74 and 104, suggesting that in both verses 74:13 and 104:25, a case can be made for the understanding of the word Sea as mythological creature. The preceding verse also mentions the תַּנִּינִים, increasing the probability that the mythic constellation is being recalled by the text.

One ought also to consider here the MUŠ-SAĜ-IMIN (literally “the seven headed snake”) of Sumerian origin, slain by the god Ningirsu.¹³⁸⁷ Iconographic depictions from Tell Asmar/Eshnunna also show gods battling a seven-headed

¹³⁸¹ Ebeling 1931, 38; Burkert 1992, 94, 110. According to Burkert their number is “repeated almost compulsively”.

¹³⁸² Smith & Pitard 2009, 212. I find it poorly supported on the basis that *tnn* is not paralleled with *zbl ym*, *tpṭ nhr* elsewhere in the Ugaritic texts. Notice however that *tnn* is paralleled elsewhere with other creatures from the list (*arš* in KTU 1.6 VI 51). It may also be paralleled by simple *ym*, whether referring to Yamm or to the sea, in KTU 1.83:8 (here *tan*). Benz 2013 has also argued against understanding *tnn* as an epithet of Yamm.

¹³⁸³ Widengren 1958, 171–172; Day 2000, 99.

¹³⁸⁴ E.g. Curtis 1986, 115; Herrmann 1999a, 135.

¹³⁸⁵ Loretz 1990, 76–77.

¹³⁸⁶ Widengren 1958, 170.

¹³⁸⁷ Black 1998, 134; Lipiński 1997, 507.

serpent.¹³⁸⁸ While to the modern reader the number seven does not emerge naturally from the list, the ancient reader may have had a different ear for the names – if the number seven is to be seen as significant at all. Burkert however pointed out that the “evil Seven belong above all in the realm of exorcism and protective magic”, which are well known from “a range of Akkadian incantation texts”.¹³⁸⁹ The Ugaritic list will of course also number seven if we simply remove *ym* and *nhr* from it. Yamm and Nahar should not be considered an integral component of the list on the basis of the alternative version found in KTU 1.5 I 1–3 that features neither name, supported by my suggestion that they had been added to the first list in KTU 1.3 also as a means of bolstering the reputation of Baal’s actual enemy in the Ugaritic myth, Yamm. The actual list, not including Yamm and Nahar, may have been attached to the epithets via motif attraction, the two epithets of the god not featuring in the actual list.

The latter half of the creatures (“Desire, El’s beloved”, “Rebel, El’s calf”, “Fire, El’s bitch” or “bitch of the gods”, “Flame, El’s daughter”) have seldom been associated with Yamm, although why the first part should and the second should not be has never been sufficiently explained. Likewise no sufficient explanation for the meaning or function of these names has been presented, although many of them seem to hold an association to fire. Going by Burkert, the Akkadian foes of Tiamat seemed mostly to have an association to the wind. He lists South wind, Whirlwind, and Evil wind.¹³⁹⁰ Note should be made of the fact that *arš* is paralleled by *tnn* in another portion of the Baal Cycle, KTU 1.6 VI 51, where they seem to be associated either with the Sea or Yamm, despite Smith’s attempts to translate the word *ym* here with the meaning of “day”. While he admits the possibility of translating the word also as sea,¹³⁹¹ the constellation of these names and their analogy to the monster-lists in the other portions of the Cycle strongly suggest the interpretation of the word not just as sea, but as Yamm.

I have already suggested that the list of monsters was connected to the goddess Anat due to the association of the list with water courses and the word-play between the name of the goddess and the source of the waters, while the actual god that was seen as the vanquisher of the monsters represented by the water courses in these different local traditions was the Storm-God. I have

¹³⁸⁸ Lewis 1996, 28–29. See Wiggermann 1989.

¹³⁸⁹ Burkert 1992, 94, 110.

¹³⁹⁰ Burkert 1992, 110.

¹³⁹¹ Smith 1997, 164.

suggested that the prevalence of the text format of presenting aquatic monsters in a sequence was due to the geographic information transmitted via these lists. It is the list format of the monsters that is the most significant characteristic of this tradition, not the individual items on the lists. But what other reasons are there for such clusters of mythic names?

5.1.5 The Combat Myth and Serpent Charms

In the interest of the multiplicity of answers, I propose an alternative interpretation for the monstrous names of the Ugaritic list. Based on certain Ugaritic texts mentioning similar lexical items as the verses from Isaiah and the Psalms, the cola could also be connected with the genre of incantation, specifically incantation against snakebite.¹³⁹² Snakes, especially venomous snakes, are typically connected with incantations and rituals meant to protect the user against snakebite. Such incantations are known throughout the ANE. Hendel submitted that kings all over the ANE featured images of the snakes as part of their royal vestiture to protect them against snakebite and in order to heal others.¹³⁹³ A broad claim, to be sure, but protecting his people (and their property) against snakebite may well have been one of the king's duties.

Symbolically, the snake was associated not only with venom, danger, and death, but also with healing, protection, regeneration, and immortality. The serpent is a difficult symbol, as in mythological use it can feature as an enemy or a saviour, a god or a demon, the harbinger of life and rebirth or death and damnation. Whether the serpent was used as a positive or a negative symbol depended on whether it was associated with one's own community or with one's adversaries.¹³⁹⁴ As an animal capable of speech and thought, the categories between beast and man and divinity were vanished in its character.¹³⁹⁵ In the

¹³⁹² Wyatt 1996, 97, actually mentions the snakebite incantations KTU 1.100 and 1.107 in conjunction with Is. 27:1. On Ugaritic serpent charms see del Olmo Lete 2009, 369. Del Olmo Lete 2014, 41, 51 suggests that the term for snake used in the incantation is an actual zoological specification of the snake against whom the incantation is intended and that *ltn* or Leviathan was the primordial iteration of the same ("this primordial evil power has a serpentine shape"). On p. 51 del Olmo Lete describes 1.107 as "magical praxis against snakes biting".

¹³⁹³ Hendel 1999, 745.

¹³⁹⁴ Hendel 1999, 744–746.

¹³⁹⁵ Hendel 1999, 745–747.

context of Hittite mythology, Gilan pointed out that scholars have been unable to agree on whether the serpent should symbolize chaos and evil, the winter, the lord of the underground waters, or the Kaška tribes.¹³⁹⁶ I do not suggest that the serpent could not have symbolized any – or indeed, in the spirit of the plurality of answers, all of the suggested referents – but it is clear that we ought to apply caution in assigning any *obvious* easy referents to the symbol.

While the divinity invoked in incantations of this type may in some instances have been Anat or Asherah, most of the incantations against snakebite from Ugarit invoke the female personification of the sun, Shapshu, as the messenger for some unnamed god. The goddess is mentioned, e.g. in the magical incantation text KTU 1.82 1, 6, 38 in which we find the following lines:

[] *mḥš .b 'l* [y:*tnn.w ygl. w ynšk* ' [] ... Baal crush... Tannin, and let him edge and let him
[] *ḥp.an.arṇn.ql .špš. ḥr(?) bṭnm.uḥd .b 'lm* pour (until?) ...(on the shore?) I myself will shout the
cry of Shapshu! Horon (?), grasp snakes for Baal!
... [] *tdrk.brḥ .arš .lk.pnh.yrk.b 'l* ...tread on the fleeing (one) of the ground, go before
it, people of Baal!

KTU 1.82 seems to be a collection of pieces of different incantations, and therefore the context of the stiches does not require examining in the framework of the present study. Del Olmo Lete, however holds that they all have a single theme, one against snakebites, supported by their shared vocabulary with other similar incantations, paralleling it with KTU 1.100.¹³⁹⁷ Note that while several of the names in the monster list of Anat are mentioned in the incantation (*tnn*, *bṭn*, *brḥ*), Yamm does not feature among them, at least explicitly.¹³⁹⁸ Del Olmo Lete further suggested that in the text, Baal use the coriander and the *prṭl*-plant to defeat the serpents.¹³⁹⁹ This would seem to tie to the understanding of the Storm-God's lightning weapon as a vegetal staff of some kind.

While the addressee in these lines is seemingly the god Baal, the way in which the formulaic incantations from Ugarit functioned was that a female deity, perhaps the wife of the supplicant deity, was asked to intercede on behalf of other deities for a fixed number of times, until the very last deity was able to fulfil the request that was the purpose of the incantation. While other goddesses besides Shapshu have been suggested as recipients of these incantations (Uṣḥarayu and Ashtart¹⁴⁰⁰ the foremost among them for of their connection to snakes), Shapshu's

¹³⁹⁶ Gilan 2013, 105.

¹³⁹⁷ Del Olmo Lete 2009, 373; 2014, 51.

¹³⁹⁸ Benz 2013, 138.

¹³⁹⁹ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 51.

¹⁴⁰⁰ According to Wyatt 2005a, 19, the goddess was also known to have a solar character. I am

association with horses, and the fact that most of the incantations were meant to protect horses against snakes, makes her the primary candidate for delivering the message. This is supported especially by a long and well-preserved incantation against horses suffering snakebite (KTU 1.100),¹⁴⁰¹ where the goddess is invoked.¹⁴⁰²

KTU 1.100 has been connected with the Baal Cycle, and seems to feature Baal counting snakes atop Mount Saphon on line 9.¹⁴⁰³ The end of the text features the goddess Ashtart spearing the serpent – at least according to De Moor.¹⁴⁰⁴ But although many of the characters appearing in the Baal Cycle can be found in the text, the names of the divinities are invoked as part of a ritual and there is little else to connect the text with the epic. Del Olmo Lete described the incantation as prototypical of the genre of incantations against snakebite. The ritual text is meant to prevent the event of its occasion from taking place, inoculating the horses against the venom.¹⁴⁰⁵ The incantation is, akin to the Mesopotamian incantations invoking different storm-gods to slay the serpent until the hero was found among Aruru's 66 sons discussed in section 4.1., addressed to

inclined to wonder whether the goddess' connection to Yamm is not in fact why she would have been chosen as the recipient of such an incantation, see her epithet as *bt šmm w thm*, daughter of the heavens and the deep (KTU 1.100:1), or even the upper heavenly sea and the lower subterranean sea. Perhaps Shapšu and Yamm might have featured as the parents of Ashtart, the morning star? Wyatt 2005a, 28, also suggests that the word *tnn*, featured in the text, is a masculine form of the word "tanit" or "tanith" (more familiar as the later Punic goddess Tanit), which has a probable connection with Ashtart. Also Hutton 2007, 291.

¹⁴⁰¹ The text has been translated by Virolleaud 1968, Pardee 1978, Parker 1997a, Wyatt 1998, Dietrich & Loretz 2000 and del Olmo Lete 2004 and more recently del Olmo Lete 2013 (containing photos and facsimile), 2014 with a "partially new translation". Del Olmo Lete 2004, 359, notes that it is "typical of the genre" of incantations against snakebite.

¹⁴⁰² Contra del Olmo Lete 2004, 360, 370, whose translation suggests that the *um.phl.phlt* (mother of the mare's stud) is different from Shapshu. In Del Olmo Lete 2014 he translates "The mother of the stallion (/and) the mare", but the two figures are still different from "Shapshu, her mother", although on p. 51 he acknowledges that the Sun is at the very least the grandmother of the invoked goddess. In fact, on footnote 8 on p. 40 he himself makes the point that the first line of tricola is "semantically and syntactically independent" from the parallel in the bicolon following it. I propose the following syntax:

The mother of the stallion, the she-horse –

The daughter (of the) tree, the daughter (of the) stone

The daughter (of the) heavens and (the) deep

She (the daughter) invokes her (above-mentioned) mother, Shapshu:

¹⁴⁰³ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 49, has also suggested a parallel for the text in RS 92.2016, which contains some of the same vocabulary.

¹⁴⁰⁴ De Moor 1990, 76, on the other hand, associates Ashtart with Anat – they are indeed a parallel pair on line 20 – suggesting that it is this wife of Baal that stays the Storm-God's hand from killing Yamm. Schmitt 2013, 215, on the other hand described them as sisters, basing this on no evidence.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 44. On p. 49–50 he also discussed the use of the element of water as a destructive element in incantations and magic of intervention, dissolving the 'evil' into water like in Mesopotamian *Namburbi* incantations. On p.53 he suggests that the text is "typically west-Semitic, built "in parallel" to the east-Semitic model".

11 different divinities, and it is the final divinity Horon is likely the intended champion of this particular text.¹⁴⁰⁶ But the other gods mentioned are interesting in and of themselves.

I suggest that along with the colophon dedicating the incantation to Shapshu,¹⁴⁰⁷ all the instances of a mother being invoked in the text refer to the sun-goddess (since Yamm and Shapshu both bore a connection to horses, they may have been conceived of as their *primus genus*),¹⁴⁰⁸ while it is the unnamed “daughter of tree,¹⁴⁰⁹ daughter of stone, daughter of the heavens with the deep” and the invoker of the Sun who remains a mystery – and is not necessarily the same as the *um.phl.phlt*. The partial parallel in the message formula of KTU 1.3 III 22–25 suggests that it may in fact be the goddess Anat, but ‘princess’ Ashtart may also be a candidate – although both are invoked by name in line 20.¹⁴¹⁰ Del Olmo Lete actually makes the point that the goddess, while seen as the vanquisher of serpents in the Baal Cycle, is as impotent as the other gods in performing the role in the incantation.¹⁴¹¹ There certainly are at least three agents to be found in the text: the female that is asked to intercede and invoke the Sun goddess to deliver her message to the gods who in turn are asked to deliver an incantation against snakebite, each in turn. Further Ugaritic texts that feature incantations against snakebite are KTU 1.82, 1.107 and 1.178.¹⁴¹²

Regarding the relationship between Yamm and Ashtart in the Ugaritic texts, Lambert seemed to believe that it all rests on the interpretation of a single occurrence of the word, *bl*, found in KTU 1.2 IV 28, and often connected with the Hebrew word for shame, בוש. According to him, in this part of the text Ashtart either shames Baal into not killing Yamm or orders Yamm to be scattered, which he holds is an odd punishment for a foe. Gaster, one of the first to comment on the Baal Cycle in the 1930s also favoured the interpretation that Ashtart did not wish

¹⁴⁰⁶ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 39. On p. 51 he further suggests that Horon and El are paralleled in KTU 1.107, an attempt to “harmonise the two power systems, “divine” and “magic””.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 39, describes the sun-goddess as “the best witness of the impotence of the whole pantheon” in the text.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 50, suggested that KTU 1.100 is a foundational or aetiological myth and that “magic remained the exclusive domain of certain patron deities while the rest of the pantheon had no access to it, either positively to activate it or negatively to fight against it”. The difference between our positions is that he sees Horon as the patron deity invoked by the text, whereas I see Shapshu and the Sea god as the patron deities of equines.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Emended to ‘š from del Olmo Lete’s ‘n, “spring”, following Smith & Pitard 2009, 233. Del Olmo Lete’s insistence of ‘spring’ seems to be based at least partially on his ideas of the incantational nature of water. See 2014 p. 49.

¹⁴¹⁰ Smith & Pitard 2009, 233, also connect Baal’s speech to Anat in KTU 1.3 with KTU 1.100.(1).

¹⁴¹¹ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 50.

¹⁴¹² Del Olmo Lete 2014, 51.

for Baal to kill Yamm (and “cries shame on Ba’al when he routs his foes”)¹⁴¹³, albeit his reasoning was that Ashtart as the goddess of “field-irrigation” did not wish for neither Baal the rain god nor Yamm the sea and river-god to perish, while plainly having had a hand in the defeat of Baal’s adversary. He did admit however that it is difficult to determine the place of the goddess in the myth due to the fragmentariness of her speech at the end of the poem and because the goddess recurs so rarely in the Ras Shamra texts.¹⁴¹⁴ Montgomery similarly interpreted Ashtart’s as scolding Baal, although he admits that the reason for the umbrage of the goddess is not obvious (but proceeds to explain it by the fact that the defeat of the sea involved also the defeat of the river, which is what outraged the ‘fertility goddess’).¹⁴¹⁵

Van Zijn remarked on the scarcity of mentions of Ashtart in the texts, but pointed out that while the role of the goddess in the mythological texts may have been small, while somewhat bigger in the Baal Cycle than other texts, she had a definite place in the pantheon according to the Ugaritic offering lists.¹⁴¹⁶ Smith, Wyatt, Bordreuil & Pardee,¹⁴¹⁷ and Pitard, on the other hand, seemed to be in favour of scattering. Pitard based his interpretation of how Yamm was scattered and tied up on a mountain top to the fragmentary texts KTU 1.83, one that was named by Wyatt as “A Goddess Confronts a Dragon”.¹⁴¹⁸ The relationship between Yamm and Ashtart is an admittedly difficult one to make sense of. The Ugaritic texts themselves offer very little in the way of explicating it, so comparative materials have been called upon to shed some light on the issue. In addition to the so-called Astarte-Papyrus, which I remark upon in a later section, a number of Greek and Roman texts bearing on the goddess Aphrodite (Ἄφροδιτη) have been connected to Astarte-mythos. I examine these texts in section 6.3.4. Regardless, the roles of both goddesses seem to be secondary to the core myth of battle.

Tying the section to the previous chapter, the incantation contains several place-names, each divinity invoked in their place of residence. Del Olmo Lete interprets all of the places as mythological due to the mention of the “daughter of

¹⁴¹³ Ginsberg 1935, 333, had a similar translation: “By name (?) ‘Aṯtartu rebukes (him): “Forshame, O ‘Al’iyn [Ba’lu]! --”.

¹⁴¹⁴ Gaster 1939, 22–23.

¹⁴¹⁵ Montgomery 1935, 271–272.

¹⁴¹⁶ Van Zijn 1972, 15.

¹⁴¹⁷ Bordreuil & Pardee 2009, 160.

¹⁴¹⁸ Wyatt 2002, 368–369.

heavens and the deep” in the text, and certainly a symbolic geography is at play.¹⁴¹⁹ But because several of the place-names invoked (l. 9 Saphon, l. 15, Tuttul, l. l. 35 Mari, l. 41 Ataroth, l. 46 Crete) are actual known place-names in the physical world – although cult centres to divinities – to assume that the geography in the text is symbolic geography alone is misleading. As there appears to have been a totemic relationship between nations and their river-serpents, the incantation seems also to transmit information of political geography. This may not have been the primary purpose of the text, but it accomplishes it all the same. The text contains a symbolic map, outlining the world from Crete to Mari, delineating the borders of the universe.

There is some indication that the solar deity known in the area of Southern Levant in Pre-Exilic times may have been a male deity, in which the Southern traditions differ from the Northern ones familiar from Ugarit. It also seems apparent that the Isaiahic verses discussed in the previous chapter would have lost their proposed previous connection with the sun deity at some point – even if, as some believe, Yahweh had adopted the characteristics of a solar deity, or even been regarded as one at some point in history,¹⁴²⁰ which may help explain why the verses would have persisted. The amalgamation of the characters of El and Yahweh is discussed by Kloos at length, although many of the characteristics of El that she saw in the character of Yahweh (such as the presence of an assembly of subjects) also share the characteristics of a king, and may in fact hint at the post-monarchic amalgamation of the roles of the god and the king.¹⁴²¹

There is another example of poetic couplets containing possible NWS characteristics¹⁴²², wherein familiar lexical items are found in connection with an established solar deity. A Late Assyrian cuneiform hymn (“Preceptive Hymn to

¹⁴¹⁹ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 46, 52. “Both of these divine abodes [*mšd* and *aršḫ*], like all the rest, must belong to mythical geography and do not occur in empirical sources”. This is manifestly untrue as several of the places do occur in empirical sources. He further remarks that the latter corresponds to Hurrian-Akkadian name for the river Tigris, *Arraššihu* but that it should seem “unlikely that such a well-known real name of a river should be applied to a mythical city”. I do not find this unlikely at all in light of the textual evidence discussed in the previous chapter. See especially the association of serpent Irhan as both a name for Babylon and a reference to the river Euphrates. It is not necessary for place-names to be either mythical or empirical, a place-name could be both simultaneously.

¹⁴²⁰ See e.g. May 1937; Taylor 1993; Smith 1990a. Heiser 2001, 363, reminds us that El and Baal imagery was also attributed to Yahweh. Also Wyatt 2005, 22; Hutton 2007, 273.

¹⁴²¹ Kloos 1986, 27: “when Yhwh became the most important, and in the long run even the sole god for the Israelites, he naturally assumed traits which at Ugarit belonged to El”.

¹⁴²² Lambert 1960, 121–122; Reiner 1985, 69.

Shamash”) K 33 I 35–38¹⁴²³ reads:

<p><i>te-te-ni-bir ta-ma-tum TÁL^{tum} šá-di-il-ta</i> [šá] ⁴i-gi-gi la i-du-ú qí-rib lib-bi-šá [⁴UT]U bir-bir-ru-ka ina ap-si-i ú-ri-du [⁴lah-m]u šu-ut A.AB.BA i-na-aṭ-ṭa-lu nu-úr-ka</p>	<p>You never fail to cross the wide expanse of the sea, the depth [of which] the Igigi do not know; [O S]un, your flare reaches down into the Abyss, The[monster]s of the Great Sea behold your light.</p>
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Within the context of the so-called Shamash Hymn, this couplet is not explicitly connected with snakes or snakebites, and I am not proposing that such an incantation is behind it. According to Lambert, the hymn is not an invocation.¹⁴²⁴ While in hymn is dedicated to Shamash, in *Marduk's Address to the Demons* (A 8–9) a similar function is ascribed to Marduk who observes the height of the furthest heavens and knows the depths of the gaping abyss.¹⁴²⁵

The hymn itself consists of 200 lines,¹⁴²⁶ most likely adopted from various sources, and probably containing material older than the extant copies of the text (some even clearly embedded in foreign contexts). Originally it was apparently a part of an even larger whole. The hymn is either an early text extensively reworked at a later time, or is a late composition containing much older material – analogous to the HB texts. Either way, it is probable that the hymn contained appropriations from a common source of literary tradition, its language grounded in convention.¹⁴²⁷ What makes the above couplet one of these possible extraneous insertions is the fact that the line following it marks a pronounced change in verbal form, lines 39–56 ensuing in the stative.¹⁴²⁸ Lines 169–173 further contrast the sea and the river, and the mountain and the sea, a feature of several examples of NWS literature.¹⁴²⁹

<p><i>šu-ut i-ba-'u er-se-ti TÁL^{tim}</i> <i>šu-ut ú-kab-bi-su KUR^{mes} e-lu-ú-ti</i> ⁴lah-mu š[u-ut A.A]B.BA šá ma-lu-ú pu-luḥ-ta e-ri-ib A.A[B.B]A šá ZU.AB i-ba-'ú mi-ḥir-ti ÍD šá ir-te-du-ú ⁴UTU ina maḥ-'ri'k[a]</p>	<p>They that pass over the broad earth, they that tread the high mountains, the monster, th[ey of the s]ea that are filled with fear the offering of the s[e]a, which pass over the deep the oblation of the river, which passes before y[o]u, O Sun.</p>
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The passing over of the deep also semantically parallels Ps. 8:9 (“whatsoever

¹⁴²³ For a more recent edition (including bibliography and a list of manuscripts), see Lambert 1996, 121 ff.

¹⁴²⁴ “Unlike most compositions of this kind [...]”. Lambert 1960, 121. Reiner 1985, 68, also believed it was too long for oral performance in any kind of public setting.

¹⁴²⁵ Lambert 1954–1956; 1959–1960.

¹⁴²⁶ The hymn belongs to a group of hymns all consisting of 200 lines or 100 bicola/distiches, and it is thought to contain some filler, repetition, and lines that barely bear on the topic, the addition of which seems to have served the purpose of getting the hymn to a full 200 lines. While the hymn seems to be composed around a central core, it is rather obvious that it has garnered material from other sources, perhaps inserted topically. Reiner 1985, 68–69.

¹⁴²⁷ Lambert 1960, 121–123. We also have an Akkadian anthology of incantations from Ugarit (KTU 17.155).

¹⁴²⁸ Reiner 1985, 74.

¹⁴²⁹ L. 62 may even contain a reference to the Ordeal by River: *ina hu-bur šá ti-iṣ-bu-tú*, “The Ħubur, where you decide the lawsuit”.

passes through the paths of the sea”) and Ps. 69:35 (“the seas and everything that moves therein”).

While the hymn is most likely presented here in the second person masculine gender, the Babylonian Šamaš being a masculine divinity, in the period from which this version of the popular hymn has been preserved, there was no formal difference between the singular second person masculine and the third person feminine genders.¹⁴³⁰ The feminine gender could be corroborated by SBP No. VI, which according to Langdon is a bilingual hymn concerning the “word” of Enlil.¹⁴³¹ Obv. lines 13–22 however follow a mention of Šamaš:

E-NE-EM UMUN	^p ŠÁ-KUD-ÁM GIR-GIR	The word of Shamash hastens forth
NI-GI-EN NI-GI-EN	NU-GI-EN NU-GI-EN	to the faithful I am faithful, to the faithless I am faithless
<i>ana ki-i-nu ki-na-ku ana la ki-i-nu ul ki-na-ku</i>		to the faithful I am faithful, to the faithless I am faithless
	<i>ana sar-ra sar-ku</i>	to the false I am false
<i>ana ki-i-nu ki-na-at ana sar-ra sar-rat</i>		to the faithful she is faithful, to the false she is false
ÚG ŠA(G)-TÙR-RA MU-LU NA-AN-ŠI-EM		the venom of a viper distresses
<i>i-ma-at ba-aš-mi ša ā-we-lu i-za-an-nu</i>		the poison of a snake, which distresses men
ÚG GIR-MAL MU-LU-RA NU-È-NE		the venom of scorpion does not cheer
<i>i-mat zu-ka-ki-pu ša ā-we-la la up-pu-u : la i-pa-[ša-aḥ]</i>		the poison of scorpion does not cheer men, does not make pure
	A : <i>bu-tuk-tum</i>	
GUL GIG-Û-NA-GE È ša ina šat	[<i>mu-ši šur-da-at : NE</i>]	a deluge precipitated at midnight, a deluge which is precipitated at midnight
GUL : <i>ša-ad-du</i> : ŠAR [ZAG	^{GIŠ} TIR-RA-GEDÛ	a trap set at the forest’s edge, a trap which is set at the forest’s edge
	: <i>ša ina paṭ kiš-ti ri-tu-u : A</i>]	
SA : [<i>sa-pa-ra</i> : PAR A-AB-BA-GE LAL : <i>ša ana tam-tim tar-šu</i> :] ¹⁴³²		a net stretched over the sea, a net which is stretched over the sea

Some of the vocabulary is reminiscent of the Shamash hymn, and it may well be that it is the name of Shamash that invited these obscure lines into the Enlil-hymn.

What is noteworthy is that the authors could not decide on the gender of the subject in the Akkadian lines 14–17, in which the fairly simple Sumerian line 14 (1st or 2nd person singular, but not 3rd person, literally likely rendering “you turn, I turn; you do not turn, I do not turn”¹⁴³³) is translated with various different genders. It is probable that the Akkadian authors were uncertain of the subject or even the meaning of the line, as it marks a stark difference to the preceding lines, which merely recount different divinities whose word “hastens forth from Ekur”. What remains is that here we have another text in which the sun, the sea, and the serpent feature together, and here snake venom is explicitly mentioned. Lines 18–24 also feature in SBP VII, which according to Langdon is a lament to the word of

¹⁴³⁰ Ugnad 1992 (1987), §52.

¹⁴³¹ Langdon 1909, 72.

¹⁴³² For tablets from which Langdon reconstructed the broken lines, see Langdon 1909, 72. The Sumerian lines are transcribed in CAPITAL LETTERS while the Akkadian is in *italics*.

¹⁴³³ The Sumerian verb GI had legal implications.

Nergal.¹⁴³⁴ The name of the god is however not mentioned at the beginning of the text. The first line, while broken, seems to begin with KA ÚG, “the mouth of poison”, which Langdon translated “A poisonous tooth” following the Akkadian *šinni kušī*. There are slight variations between the texts, e.g. ÚG MUŠ ŠAG-TÚR-RA on line 3 and *i-ma-at ba-aš-mu* on line 4. Shamash is mentioned in the hymn on line 27, coming in the last place in the enumeration of gods, as in the previous text. While it is possible that the hymn was meant not for any single god but the group of gods named in it, there is still cause to suggest that these lines had a particular connection to the sun-god.

There is also a late Babylonian bilingual text (SBP XX) recounting the battle of Ninib son of Enlil against a monster,¹⁴³⁵ which in the Akkadian version is called *bašmu*, a serpent (SBP XX II obv. 12, *ba-aš-mu [te]-bu-u ina ba-lum be-lum par-ši [iṣṣariḫšu]*,¹⁴³⁶ “the snake entering, without the lord of ordinances he gave heed”). It is possible that this text has been influenced by earlier versions of the Combat Myth, but it also seems to be drawing some of its vocabulary from earlier Babylonian texts, such as the ones examined above. Ninib, son of the Storm-God, seems to have many characteristics of the Storm-God in the text himself. In SBP XX II obv. 8–10, Ninib “launches bolts of light” and “utters a loud cry”. The possibility that Ninib is an alternative name (or Sumerization: NIN-*ib*) of the Sargonic tribal god Ilib (which is to say, the deified ancestor) ought to be considered, because this would make his role as the son of Enlil and a storm-god instantly comprehensible.¹⁴³⁷ What the text goes to show is that the vocabulary of serpents was by no means restricted to contexts with the sun-god. Even if in earlier times these verses had been part of a Shamash hymn or incantation, and it is likely based on the fact that the weapon employed by Ninib is the light of the sun,¹⁴³⁸ this association had been divorced in later times.

The reason why incantational language originally associated with a female

¹⁴³⁴ Langdon 1914, 76. This is apparently based on the fact that ^dgu-la, which he interprets as Nergal, comes first in the list of gods. Nergal or ^dgu-la is not mentioned in SBP VI.

¹⁴³⁵ Langdon 1909, 224–225.

¹⁴³⁶ Reconstructed by Langdon 1909, 232, from the preceding Sumerian line. Langdon translates *paršum*, a translation in itself of the Sumerian ME as “order”. The Sumerian concept of ME is notoriously difficult to render into modern languages.

¹⁴³⁷ Langdon 1909, 225, claims that Ninib was the original hero of the divine conflict and that Babylonian theologians later attributed Ninib’s deeds to Marduk, “in whose favour most of the legends were remodeled”. While the physical age of at least one of the tablets is from the 2nd century BCE, Langdon seems to presuppose a much longer pre-history for the texts, in which he is most likely correct. Unfortunately we have no way of knowing when the text was actually composed.

¹⁴³⁸ Langdon 1909, 225.

divinity may have been annexed by a male deity could have something to do with a process of “Shamashizing”, “Yahwehizing”, and “Baalizing” of religion, of which we have indication in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and in Ugarit.¹⁴³⁹ According to Smith & Pitard, this may also explain why we find ancient divinatory language being drawn upon within these later compositions, some tropes enjoying a long later life in NWS literature.¹⁴⁴⁰ According to Hurowitz, the fact that the Shamash hymn was cited in other works of literature may indicate that rather than as a liturgical composition, it would have been regarded as a didactic work.¹⁴⁴¹ One need not exclude the other, as there were hardly any texts in ancient Mesopotamia that were not used didactically, the list of river-monsters included. The process of the formation of the hymn was similar to the formation of the Isaiahic text.

But it seems plausible that ultimately the use of these couplets in a didactic setting is what helped preserve them in varying contexts. What I suggest is that a piece from an incantation against snakebite, an incantation for the protection of equines, was used as a part of the hymn – wittingly or unwittingly – and it is through motif attraction, its association with the sun who was one of the protectors of horses from snakes, that it became a part of the hymn for the sun-god. This incantation against snakebite named all the major serpents, enumerating the rivers with which the serpents were associated. While del Olmo Lete suggested that the danger presented by snake venom against horses would not have been so prominent in an “urban civilization” such as Ugarit to would not have been so prominent as to require anti-magical praxis, suggesting that texts of this type were used to communicate other things, such as the unification of the two systems of dealing with the supernatural, ‘magic’ and ‘religion’.¹⁴⁴² Although the anxieties caused by serpents may have been partially symbolic, there should be no cause to doubt the importance of the animal in BA economies, especially in warfare, and these anxieties giving rise to both superstitions and sympathetic magic.

So who, then, struck the serpent? Who pierced the Tannin? The sources

¹⁴³⁹ Edelman 2009, 82, described the ideological programme that lead to the adoption of Yahweh Elohim as the sole and supreme deity of the religious community of Judah in the Post-Exilic situation. On the adoption of elements of NWS religion in the cult of Yahweh, see Hutton 2007, 272.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Smith & Pitard 2009, 234. Del Olmo Lete 2009, 379, also reminds us of the concern urban societies of the era had for snakebite. In fact, the fear of snakes is so primal that it has been observed even in other primates. See Van Le & al. 2013.

¹⁴⁴¹ Hurowitz 2007, 35.

¹⁴⁴² Del Olmo Lete 2014, 52.

available to us offer a surprising consensus: it was *she* that struck the serpent, and the identity seems only secondarily to have been associated with a warrior-god. It seems not insignificant that the feminine aspect has either been preserved the Isaiahic verses – or at least nothing in them impresses the masculine gender. Whether the ‘she’ of the couplet was a goddess – perhaps known by different names at different geographic locations – or the arm of Yahweh, or even the city of Jerusalem, is a question that may have garnered different answers with changing tides and contexts. The question to be asked is which is the more likely locus for the Isaiahic passage, the employment (whether accidentally, unknowingly, purposefully or mockingly, as the proposals go)¹⁴⁴³ of the language of NWS polytheism in the praise of Yahweh,¹⁴⁴⁴ or the use and perusal of local popular rhetoric and verses of vulgar poetry in the extolment of Yahweh and his deeds, possibly exemplifying his appropriation of the aspects of a solar deity.

Bearing on the topic of this dissertation, it seems unlikely that Yamm in Ugarit would have been associated with all of these serpent creatures for the reasons given at the start of the chapter. If Yamm indeed had a connection to horses, as the sea had at least on the Hellenistic Eastern Mediterranean, the god would not have been associated with creatures detrimental to the well-being of horses, if not as the protector of horses *from* the creatures. De Moor actually associated the equines of KTU 1.100:1 with Demeter and Poseidon (“the Mare who was mated by the stallion Poseidon”).¹⁴⁴⁵ There is an intimate connection between the horse and the king, as already the Amorite kings used the public display of the horse a symbol of might. The Amorite kingdoms imported horses from Anatolia.¹⁴⁴⁶ A royal interest in horses is also witnessed by the Alalakh texts (AT 240, 245, 269), who may have paid tribute toward the upkeep of the horses of the king of Yamhad.¹⁴⁴⁷ Such a strong association of equines and the sea on one part of the Mediterranean allows us to speculate whether the same was true in

¹⁴⁴³ Or in the case of del Olmo Lete 2014, 52, “commemorated in Hebrew lyric”, which he suggests has taken place in Pss. 24:1–2, 74:12–17, 89:10–13.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Smith 2002a, 26, dates the first expressions of Israelite monotheism to the 7th century. The validity of such assertions is dependent on one’s definition of monotheism. The origins of monotheism in Assyria have been discussed by Parpola 1997.

¹⁴⁴⁵ De Moor 1987, f146. Del Olmo Lete 2014, 46, pointed out that we know little about the connection between Shapshu and horses, and this is true. Most of the evidence is in the form of analogue.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 53, discussed the origin of the incantation against snakebite, suggesting that it is “recognisably Hurrian”, connected to the cult of horses, transmitted to the Hittite world by the Hurrians from the Indo-Aryan stratum in the population, although in the case of KTU 1.100 displaying a native tradition written in the model of Akkadian precedents.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Sasson 1966, 176. The animal is mentioned in connection to Zimri-Lim in ARM 5:76.

other parts of the same cultural sphere, which I discuss in section 5.3. Of the HB texts, 2 Kgs. 23:11 reference to “the horses given to the sun by the kings of Judah” (אֶת־הַסּוּסִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנוּ מֶלֶכִי יְהוֹדָה לַשָּׁמֶשׁ) and Gen. 49:17 reference to the adder that bites the heels of the horse (נָחָשׁ עַל־יָרֵךְ שָׁפִיץ עַל־אָרֶחַ הַנֶּשֶׁף עֲקָבֵי־סוּס) have been suggested as referring to the tradition of incantations against snakebite.¹⁴⁴⁸

Since *ym* and *nhr* were the foes of Baal in the Baal Cycle, and if the Storm-God’s conquering of the sea had some mythological significance, it makes sense for Anat to mention Yamm and Nahar in her list of vanquished foes in KTU 1.3. Such a list of vanquished foes may also be one of the most apparent parallels between the Hebrew and Ugaritic traditions, even if the details of names vary. The rest of the names of monsters, names not otherwise known from the mythological narratives, may in both cases have followed the sea and the river by natural association (they seem more loosely connected to the sea and the river than to each other in the textual evidence, which makes sense if the creatures reference rivers and not actual serpents) – even if in a context contradictory to the usual, where the sea-deity would have been asked to protect equines from the serpents and from fire. But as the patron of horses, the sea-god would have been the natural recipient for incantations of this kind. This however remains highly speculative, and as far as I know, it has not been suggested before. It serves only to show how little of the function and meaning of ancient texts we really know. I will discuss the connection between the sea-god and horses on the section of the iconography of the sea-god.

5.2 Yamm in Other Texts from Ugarit

In addition to the text(s) of KTU 1.1–1.2 and a few other portions of the Baal Cycle that mention the sea (namely the list in KTU 1.3 and the end of KTU 1.6), there are a few other texts from Ugarit which have bearing on the topic of this study. The foremost among them is KTU 1.83, which has been seen as a parallel for Psalm 74. The god Yamm is also mentioned in some, although not all, of the god-lists discovered in Ugarit (KTU 1.47, 1.118, RS 20.24).¹⁴⁴⁹ In addition to

¹⁴⁴⁸ Del Olmo Lete 2014, 46, citing Caquot. He mistakenly refers to 2 Kgs. 23:1.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Wyatt 2000, 598, has dubbed these the ‘canonical’ god-lists. The bilingual list RS 92.2004 contains ^dA.AB.BA, but the Ugaritic correspondent for the term is missing.

these, in this chapter I also discuss KTU 1.23, the text often dubbed as *The Birth of the Gracious Gods*. Sasson pointed out that the interpretation of the Ugaritic texts is due to their fragmentary nature more dependent on the interpretation of individual scholars than we would like to admit,¹⁴⁵⁰ and the problem is compounded with the shorter and less well examined texts.

The problem with examining the god Yamm in the Ugaritic texts outside of the Baal Cycle is that for the most part it lacks the epithets which clearly mark the sea as a divinity rather than as a physical phenomenon. We cannot always be certain that the Ugaritic texts featuring *ym* are speaking of Yamm, not only because the noun signifying the sea and the name Yamm are not differentiated, but because the word *ym* meaning ‘day’ has the same outward appearance. Gordon suggested that there was a goddess of daylight called *ym* in Ugarit.¹⁴⁵¹ We have insufficient evidence to posit outright the existence of this goddess, possible though it may be that one existed. And while some occurrences of the letter combination *ym* doubtless refer to the day rather than to the sea, most of the references to the god Yamm are easy enough to extract from context, as well as from his epithets *zbl* and *mdd il*. But with regard to the conflation of daylight-*ym* and sea-*ym*, the semantic similarity of Hebrew נָהָר (‘river’) and נֶהָר (‘shine’, ‘daytime’) is rather curious, and it might witness to the conception of the heavens as the sea above, reflecting or mirroring the sea below. Note also Matthiae’s (1992) identification of Yamm as a winged deity, wings being a feature often found with celestial divinities. I will return to this concept in connection with the iconography of the sea-god.

Malamat claimed that “Yamm, the god of the sea is most prominent in the Ugaritic pantheon”,¹⁴⁵² which is a rather confusing statement. I take it to mean that unlike in most pantheons of the ANE, the sea does actually seem to feature as a divinity in Ugarit. But it is a stretch to claim his place to be *prominent*, even in the pantheon of the seabound Ugarit. It also does not account for the importance of Poseidon and related Hellenistic aquatic divinities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The actual godhood or divinity of Yamm has also been called into question. But it remains that in Ugarit, Yamm (or the sea) is mentioned in several

¹⁴⁵⁰ Wyatt 2003, 152; Sasson 2005, 217.

¹⁴⁵¹ Gordon 1947, 411. Cooper (1981, 370) cited KTU 1.4 VII 55 as a possible example of this. The line [*mm* .] *ym* . *bn* . *zlm* . *r* can be understood to refer to the sea, however, which is how Smith 1997a, 138, has interpreted it.

¹⁴⁵² Malamat 1998, 28. See also Margalit 1990, 272.

god-lists,¹⁴⁵³ whether pantheon lists or sacrificial texts. This fact often seems overlooked in research, perhaps out of a desire to see Baal's adversary as a chaotic monster rather than a proper functional god in the cult of the city (so much so that a goddess of the day written with the same cuneiform alphabetic signs as Yamm has been posited).¹⁴⁵⁴

Malamat's position, in which Yamm's appearance in the sacrificial lists of Ugarit (e.g. KTU 1.148:9) indicates the god's "integral position in the canonical pantheon of Ugarit",¹⁴⁵⁵ is hardly better, is not included in nearly all of the lists. Nor does the idea of a "canonical pantheon" make much sense in the context of Bronze Age religious conceptions, where gods could be added and removed from the lists depending on changing political tides. If it is the so-called dynastic pantheon that Malamat means, Yamm does not seem to feature in it.¹⁴⁵⁶ But Yamm does appear as a god in sacrificial lists such as KTU 1.39:13 (between the Hurrian goddess Usharaya and Baal), as well as twice in KTU 1.148:9, 41. Yamm seems to also be represented as a theophoric element in some Ugaritic names,¹⁴⁵⁷ such as *ymil* ('Yamm-is-my-god'), indicating that Yamm may indeed have been considered a god and not just the adversary of Baal.¹⁴⁵⁸ This is further supported by the fact that the Sumerian term A.AB.BA, associated with Yamm in Ugaritic

¹⁴⁵³ Cornelius & Niehr (2004, 43) translate "Meeresgott" in KTU 1.118:29. Yamm is also the recipient of a sacrifice in KTU 1.162, which reads *lym š*, "to the sea a/one sheep".

¹⁴⁵⁴ Nielsen 1936, 27–37. Watson 1993, 432. Watson (1996, 316–317) still proposes translating *atrt ym* with "She who determines the Day" based on a hymn to Amurru (OECT XI:25–26), and the basic meaning of "fateful day" for *ym* in this context. Because the maritime connection of the goddess appears in so many different sources, I find this interpretation unlikely.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Malamat 1998, 28. Also Smith 1994b, 151, who suggests that the "cult of Yamm may have continued in the first millennium Phoenician cities".

¹⁴⁵⁶ Del Olmo Lete 2004, 127.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Malamat 1998, 28.

¹⁴⁵⁸ There are 13 attestations of the element *ym* in personal names in the Ugaritic texts (based on the paper given by W. van Soldt in the 59^e *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* meeting in Ghent, Belgium). These include names such as *ymil* (KTU 4.75 V 14), *ilym* (KTU 4.116:13), *mlkym* (KTU 4.126:19), and *abdym* (KTU 4.7:7, 4.103:18, 47, 3.3:10, 4.341:3). Tugendhaft 2013, 195. The divine name *ym* clearly appears as a theophoric element also in Mari personal names *abdym*, "Servant of Yamm" and *ilym* "My god is Yamm", See Huffmon 1965, 120, 124, 210; Gelb 1980, 272–273; Durand 1993, 57–60, Smith 1994b, 151. Personal names carrying the onomastic element of the god Yamm or the sea have also been proposed in the Biblical text, ie. Abiyam, "My-father-is-the-sea", possibly even as a theophoric element "My-father-is-Yamm" on the basis that not only does the name Abijah (e.g. Is. 8:2) clearly feature the theophoric element Yahweh, but the name of Abiyam (1 Kgs. 15:1, 7–8) seems to have been replaced with the name Abijah by the Chronicler (2 Chr. 12:16, 13:1–4). The most obvious reason for the renaming of this Judahite king would have been theological, but whether it was to strengthen the Yahwistic element or to fade out the traditional "Canaanite" polytheistic element is difficult to determine. A Tell Taanach tablet also features the name *ahiyamm*, "My brother is the sea" or "My brother is Yamm". Glock 1983, 60. Cf. also the name יָמִיאל in Gen. 46:10 and Ex. 6:15 (and its corruption יָמִיאל in Num. 26:9, 12 and 1 Chr. 4:24), usually translated "day of god", which ought to be reconsidered in light of names such as *ymil*.

bilinguals, does feature with the divine determinative (the *dingir*-sign) in Ugarit (RS 20.24:29 clearly equates ^dA.AB.BA with *ym*),¹⁴⁵⁹ which it usually does not in Mesopotamian texts.¹⁴⁶⁰

The relationship between A.AB.BA and *ym* in the Ugaritic god-lists has been studied recently by Tugendhaft.¹⁴⁶¹ An important thing to note is that while the thematic parallels between the Mari text FM 7 38 and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle are immense, the only actual textual link between them is in these bilingual god-lists. It must also be mentioned that the divinized sea is featured in several Hittite-Hurrian evocation rituals and god-lists (e.g. KBo 32,2 iii 5', 24:2, 24:3, KUB 15:31 iii 39, 15:32 iv 8, 34 i 2, 33b i 2, 15:34 iii 21 29:4 iii 46), which may have influenced the Ugaritic lists. This may be further supported by the fact that Yamm does indeed appear next to the Hurrian goddess in KTU 1.39. It should be noted that in the Hittite-Hurrian lists, the divinized sea is portrayed as an aspect of nature, appearing alongside mountains, valleys, and rivers. A comparison between the dynastic god-list and the Akkadian god-lists RS 20.24 and RS 92.2004 demonstrates not only the association of the concepts in Ugarit, but also that the sea was considered a deity.

While Malamat claimed that the Ugaritic texts recount “several epic tales of the war between the god of the sea (*Yamm*) and other deities”, thus assuming that there existed poorly preserved myths of Yamm’s battles against the goddesses Anat and Ashtart (“*Aštatar*”),¹⁴⁶² mentions of Yamm outside the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle and the god-lists are difficult to find. Among them, KTU 1.83 is a text often connected to the Combat Myth. This text, written on a small clay tablet, has been linked with Psalm 74, in which vestiges of the Yamm mythology in the HB have been proposed.¹⁴⁶³ The Ugaritic text is a mythological or magic text that may reference the destruction of Yamm. It is originally thought to have been comprised of 20–27 lines, but only nine remain. KTU 1.83 was discovered in

¹⁴⁵⁹ Hess 2007, 86, discussed KTU 1.47 in the same context, as it associates Yamm with Tiamat and Baal with Haddu.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Neither does Tiamat, even when presented as a clearly anthropomorphic being, one Late Babylonian/Early Persian period text notwithstanding (‘Myth of the Plow’ or the *Theogony of Dunnu*, BM 74329, although the sea of the myth does not necessarily refer to Tiamat, but rather to a female personification of the sea). See Lambert 2013, 387–395. RS 20.24, however, does not follow the standard Mesopotamian order of divinities but reflects local NWS conceptions. Tugendhaft (2010, 697) argued that it displays ‘indigenous’ Ugaritic tradition of ‘divine personnel and hierarchy’ specifically, even though we only have evidence of the list having been stored at Ugarit (not composed there), and in a private archive to boot.

¹⁴⁶¹ Tugendhaft 2010.

¹⁴⁶² Malamat 1998, 28.

¹⁴⁶³ Pitard 1998, 276–278.

1952 in the archive of the royal palace, scattered among other texts. It is not written by the hand of Ilumilku.¹⁴⁶⁴ According to Pitard, the function of the text may have been cultic or ritual: controlling chaos or creating order was achieved by recitation of the text. He held that the text must have had a specific function, even though the fragmentary nature of the texts allows only speculation on its specifics.¹⁴⁶⁵

The text has been interpreted as portraying the binding of a dragon-shaped, fish-tailed Yamm into the Lebanon Mountains, so that he might dry up.¹⁴⁶⁶ The motif of drying up is reminiscent of Inanna's battle against the mountain Ebih, whose waters the goddess threatens to dry up.¹⁴⁶⁷ The concept of the drying up of the sea is also found in several Biblical texts. Kloos suggested that the idea of the splitting of the sea is implied in the drying up of the sea,¹⁴⁶⁸ but it would seem based on the comparative texts discussed in this study that they are two separate traditions. What is noteworthy about the Biblical passages is the fact that all of them feature the parallelism of sea with either the river or some other body of water, which could at the very least indicate the use of ancient NWS poetic vocabulary. On the other hand, some of the passages clearly draw from the Exodus traditions, indicating influence of the hybrid Babylonian myth, discussed in Chapter 6.

The idea of setting boundaries for the sea is also featured in a few other texts of the HB. The Jeremiahic passage seen as the most relevant to the topic of the Combat Myth is the oracle of Jer. 5:22, although I have argued that there are texts in Jeremiah which are more relevant. In the passage we find the following verses:

¹⁴⁶⁴ Hutton 2007, 287.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Pitard 1998, 262–271. Bidmead (2004, 67) writes that the recounting of the *EE* in the annual festival of Akītu had the purpose of restoring the orderly nature of the world. This widely accepted stated purpose of the Babylonian myth has undoubtedly coloured the interpretation of the Ugaritic texts.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Stoltz 1999, 740. I am uncertain how Stoltz has come up with this description of Yamm, but Day (2000, 86) pointed out that it was Dagan that was portrayed as a fish-tailed god at Ugarit. If El and Yamm are sometimes difficult to tell apart, or their spheres of influence are differentiated, the same holds true for El and Dagan. While Wyatt (2003, 153) explained El and Dagan's association by the fact that El was once regarded as a moon-god, this hardly explains why their characters would have bled into each other, as it was with the grain that the storm-god Dagan was associated with – unless the bounty of nature translated to the bounty of the sea on the coastal area. One might wonder whether it was El's association with the half-fish Dagan that has in part encouraged his conflation with Yamm.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Kramer 1944, 83. More than in terms of specific details, the goddess of the story resembles Anat in her dominance posturing.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Kloos 1986, 205.

הַאֲוֹתֵי לֹא־תִירָאוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 אִם מִפְּנֵי לֹא תִחִילוּ
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי חוֹל גְּבוּל לָיִם
 חֲקִיעוֹלָם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹרָהוּ
 וַיִּתְּעֶשׂוּ וְלֹא יִכָּבְדוּ
 וְהָמָּו גִּלְיוֹ וְלֹא יַעֲבֹרָהוּ

Jer. 5:22 “Do you not fear me?” (This is) the oracle of Yahweh:
 “Will you not tremble before me?
 I that placed the sand as a *barrier for the sea*,
 an eternal boundary, and it cannot *cross over it*.
 And though they *roil*, they cannot prevail;
 though its waves roar, it cannot *cross over it*”.

If the Jeremiah passage does contain allusions to Ugaritic texts, particularly to the fragmentary KTU 1.83, these allusions seem to have been thoroughly demythologized. The verses may also simply refer to the Pre-Ptolemaic conception of the world (i.e. flat-earth, as opposed to the understanding of the earth as a globe) in spite of the weakly anthropomorphizing use of language. The concept of a boundary set for the sea is also found in Prov. 8:29: “When he set for the sea its boundary, so that the water should not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth”.

Hutton connected the text of KTU 1.83 with KTU 1.3 III 38–42, featuring the list of creatures vanquished by the goddess Anat (discussed previously). He interpreted 1.83 as the goddess threatening to conquer Yamm, or boasting of having done so.¹⁴⁶⁹ The reason KTU 1.83 is so popular among the comparative studies of Ugaritic and Biblical texts, however, is because of the mention of *tnn*, associated with the Biblical Tannin, which has been interpreted as being muzzled.¹⁴⁷⁰ The text is difficult to interpret. On lines 9–19, a female figure¹⁴⁷¹ seems to bind a creature called Tunnan on the heights of Lebanon. Yamm and Nahar are addressed¹⁴⁷² on lines 11–12, although it is unclear whether they are to be associated with Tunnan.¹⁴⁷³

While a loose semantic and possibly thematic connection between the text and Ps. 74 may be established, the Ugaritic text has no apparent link to the institution of kingship beyond the names shared by it and the texts of the Baal Cycle. While KTU 1.83 is not a part of what we have dubbed the Baal Cycle of texts (which may not feature a continuous narrative), it is clearly connected to the same mythos, based on the vocabulary used in it. According to Pitard, the short text allows us to speculate on whether references to the Ugaritic Yamm could be

¹⁴⁶⁹ Hutton 2007, 287.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Pitard 1998, 261. Note, however, that the word appears to read *tan*, rather than the *tnn* found elsewhere in Ugaritic texts. In addition to the Baal Cycle and 1.83, the name *tnn* is also featured in KTU 1.82.

¹⁴⁷¹ The feminine verbal form *trks* is thought to refer to Anat. Pitard 1998, 261, 273–274.

¹⁴⁷² The vocative prefix *y-* precedes the names: ‘Oh, Yamm! Oh, Nahar!’ From this we may be able to postulate that the words do refer to the anthropomorphic divinities.

¹⁴⁷³ There are several alternative translations for these lines. See discussion in Pitard 1998, 269–280. The text has also been translated by Day 1986, 15–16; Parker 1997a, 192–193.

found in the texts of the HB.¹⁴⁷⁴

Psalms 74 presents an interesting case, featuring the name Leviathan (also found in Ps. 104:26). The name appears only twice in the psalms, and six times in the texts of the HB. In addition to Pss. 74 and 104, it can be found twice in Isaiah 27:1 and twice in the Book of Job (3:8, 41:1).

אַתָּה פִּירְרַת בְּעֹזֶךָ יָם	74:13–14	You cleft <i>the sea</i> with your strength,
שִׁבַּרְתָּ רִאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל-הַמַּיִם		You shattered the heads of the <i>tannins</i> on the waters,
אַתָּה רִצַּצְתָּ רִאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן--		You crushed the heads of Leviathan

The strongest link between Ps. 74:13–14 has been established with the verb *bl* in KTU 1.83:11. It has been interpreted as meaning scattering, based on an Arabic cognate, which would parallel the scattering of Leviathan's corpse in the psalm.¹⁴⁷⁵ A similar verb הוֹבִשֵּׁת is used in 74:15, but in connection with the rivers. In the Biblical text, the meaning is usually 'to dry up'. It is unclear how KTU 1.83 relates to the Baal Cycle on the one hand, and – if the action in the text is to be interpreted as drying – whether the drying or the binding of the monster bears any connection to Baal's battle against Yamm.

It is no coincidence that the psalms, Isaiah, and Job feature most of the references to the mythological monsters discussed in this chapter. The context for all of the references to Leviathan is poetic. Disregarding the apparent *matres lectiones* characters in the Hebrew לוֹיָתָן, the word resembles the Ugaritic *ltn*, vocalized varyingly as Lotan(u) or Litan(u), one of the monsters that goddess Anat brags about having battled.¹⁴⁷⁶ It is uncertain whether the same creature is meant by both names, but the words appear to be cognate.¹⁴⁷⁷ The Hebrew name seems to be derived from the root לוי with the meaning of 'slithering' or ליה with the meaning of 'joining together'.¹⁴⁷⁸ Frayne sought the meaning of the word from the Semitic root *lwy* with the meaning of 'twisting', connecting it with a lion-headed, serpent-tailed, winged chimaera found in MBA Ebla.¹⁴⁷⁹ It has been suggested that Leviathan is a loanword into Hebrew, based on the fact that despite its apparent feminine grammatical form, it behaves like a masculine word.¹⁴⁸⁰ If the name is cognate to the Ugaritic *ltn*, however, it would appear that the n-

¹⁴⁷⁴ Pitard 1998, 276–278.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Pitard 1998, 276–277.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 47.

¹⁴⁷⁷ According to Lipiński (1997, 506–507), Leviathan was “doubtless” borrowed from Canaanite mythology, although he preferred Southern Canaanite to Ugaritic traditions as the source. I submit that the name and the traditions are bound to the Litani River and dispersed from there to the wider Levantine area.

¹⁴⁷⁸ HALOT 1995; BDB 2006.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Frayne 2013, 79.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Lipinski 1997, 504, 509.

element is the middle radical of the root, to say nothing about the instability of the gender of Hebrew nouns to begin with.

Yet it is well known that the Ugaritic name *ltn* has a clear etymological and a quite possible mythological connection with the Biblical name Leviathan. While perhaps not a direct antecedent of the Biblical name, לִיָּתָן and *ltn* do share some semantic as well as mythical connotations. Day suggested that *ltn* should be understood as the proper name of the *tnn*-dragon.¹⁴⁸¹ It would seem that at least all of the monsters named in the Ugaritic list should be understood as proper names, based on analogy and evidenced by the names on the list which by necessity are proper names, such as “Flame, the daughter of El”. The same conclusion cannot be drawn from the Biblical text, as no obvious proper names present themselves. There are also known cases in the Hebrew text of these names referring to ordinary animals such as jackals, snakes, and crocodiles.¹⁴⁸² The immediate context does not inform us about how they are to be interpreted in the Biblical texts, but the NWS traditions give us more context for their interpretation.

Wakeman has suggested that 74:13 is one of the rare examples of the word נָחַם being used as a proper name.¹⁴⁸³ V. 13 also seems to be one of the Biblical passages where the sea is explicitly done violence upon by the god. The sea in the passage may be understood as being divided, even though the root פָּרַר has multiple meanings: in addition to dividing, it can mean splitting, breaking apart, cracking through, or breaking. Therefore, while the division of the sea is a possible interpretation, and one that has been used to connect the psalm to the Exodus-tradition, it need not be the explicit intention of the verse. The constellation of the monstrous creatures familiar from the list of monsters vanquished by Anat connects the verse more with the NWS mythological complex, which may have been attached to the Exodus traditions later on. What is clear is that in the psalm, God visits an act of violence upon the sea. In v. 18, the destruction of the sea is paralleled by the breaking of the heads of the תַּנִּינִים upon the waters.

While the psalm is of Exilic origin (e.g. according to Spieckermann),¹⁴⁸⁴ it has been speculated that the composers or authors of the psalms would have used

¹⁴⁸¹ Day 2000, 99.

¹⁴⁸² Van Henten 1999, 265. According to him, natural monsters such as snakes and crocodiles could also be used to describe mythological monsters such as dragons.

¹⁴⁸³ Wakeman 1973, 92–101.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Spieckermann 1989, 126.

quotations from contemporary or ambient literature, whether written or oral.¹⁴⁸⁵ Because most of the comparative materials, the sources of these quotations, are not extant, the complete gamut of intertextuality in Hebrew poetry will continue to elude us. But Ps. 74 does seem to contain many curious elements pertaining to the Combat Myth, scattered though they are in different parts of the psalm. V. 1 makes mention of the “smoking of your nostrils”, recalling the image of the bull. V. 2 names Zion as the dwelling place of the divinity, recalling the Saphon of Ugaritic myth.¹⁴⁸⁶ V. 11 makes mention of the hand and the right hand of the divinity, suggesting that the divinity draw it forth from his bosom (מִקְרָב, lit. ‘innards’) to destroy his adversaries, which strongly indicates that the hand of Yahweh should here be understood as a weapon.¹⁴⁸⁷ In v. 12 god is named the king. In v. 14, the Sea and the *tanninim* of v. 13 are paralleled with the crushing of the heads of the Leviathan.

With the river also mentioned in v. 15, verses 13–15 mention four of the monsters featured in the Ugaritic monster-list of KTU 1.3 III 38–46 – or five, if the multiple references to heads can be counted in favour of the ‘potentate with seven heads’. The word אֲשָׁפִי is repeated but twice, and yet the adversaries named altogether number seven. The enemies defeated by Yahweh in vv. 14–15, which are not mentioned in the Ugaritic list, include ‘desert demons’ (צִיִּים) and ‘the fountain and the brook’ (מַעְיָן וְנַחַל), the latter pair, if nothing else, serving to hide the anthropomorphic character of the river. The river is referred to in the feminine plural, which increases the credence of interpreting these creatures as references to rivers and natural formations. The fact that the list features alternative names for different geographic locations is to be expected.

The order of the beasts likewise does not follow the Ugaritic list, but the other monsters are book-ended by the sea and the rivers in the psalm. The drying up of the rivers in v. 15 seems to be followed by the recollection of the acts of creation: day and night, sun and light. Lesser points of resemblance include the mention of fire in v. 7 (compare with *īst kltb il*) and the possible subtle allusion to

¹⁴⁸⁵ Loretz 1990, 54. See Loretz 2002, 406, on the difficulty of recognizing these kinds of quotations.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Widengren (1958, 164) discussed the conflation of Saphon and Zion, also a feature of Ps. 48. Note also that Strabo frequently places Mt. Casius, which other classical authors associate with Saphon, in Southern Palestine. What makes the study of ancient geography challenging is that a single place-name was often used for more than one location. See also Müller 2008, 195–199, according to whom Zion as Saphon is found in the oldest “kernel” of the psalm (vv. 2–9), representing the mountain as the omphalos of the world.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Note, however, that the name Yahweh is not used in the psalm.

mdđ il with the מוֹעֲדֵי-אֵל of v. 8. Out of the verbs of destruction used in the passage, the כָּלָה of v. 11 also matches the *klt* of 1.3 III 39. The *Leitwort* of the Ugaritic list, *mḥšt*, is not paralleled in the Hebrew text, but perhaps a similarity can be found in the fact that in both lists, the verbs of destruction appear in the perfect tense/aspect.

According to Trudinger, parallels between Ps. 74 and “the accounts of Marduk and Baal” are flawed, because in the psalm the mythic pattern is “brief to the point of opacity”, and because in the other accounts “it is given in great detail, with motivation, weapons, strategies and gory outcome dramatically portrayed”.¹⁴⁸⁸ But the two major accounts in which all of these are to be found (*EE* and the Baal Cycle) are an exception to the rule. Trudinger’s description of the psalm as being unclear on the number of enemies and the other accounts having a clear adversary with the fate of its retinue clarified merely displays a lack of engagement with the source texts. But the point he makes regarding the fact that we find only short and incomplete forms of the mythic pattern in the texts of the HB, as opposed to the epic mythic cycles, is valid (unless the Exodus story is read as an epic mythic cycle). One explanation for the paucity of evidence may be the specific political conditions which had to be present for the myths to be written down both in LBA Ugarit and in the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The passage of 74:11–17 contains a constellation of the Combat Myth, mentioning many of the *Leitworte* of the locus. V. 11 mentions *the hand* and *the right hand* of Yahweh. V. 12 establishes Yahweh as *the king*. In v. 13, *the sea* is broken into pieces, and in v. 13 through 14, the other sea monsters are conquered. In v. 15, the fountain and the brook are cleft, and in v. 17 Yahweh has established ‘all the borders of *the earth*’. McKenzie interpreted this portion of the psalm as referencing the idea of creation, but as, according to him, there is no actual Hebrew creation myth containing the concept of combat, these verses exemplified the assimilation of mythological language.¹⁴⁸⁹ While it is true that no explicit myth of creation combat exists in the HB, and that at the later stages of the redaction of the psalms an assimilation of mythological language probably took place, such judgements do the actual mythic remnants in these verses a disservice.

While the theme of combat seems to be almost entirely absent from Hebrew accounts of creation – even when the already subjugated adversaries of

¹⁴⁸⁸ Trudinger 2001, 32.

¹⁴⁸⁹ McKenzie 1950, 275 – 282.

Yahweh are named and mentioned – combat between supernatural beings is still a recurrent theme in the HB. Day was convinced that Yahweh's triumph over Leviathan took place during creation,¹⁴⁹⁰ although this is supported neither by the HB nor the Ugaritic evidence. To Wyatt, Ps. 74 was a re-enactment of the triumph over Chaos, which could be invoked again and again, and especially whenever crises threatened the community.¹⁴⁹¹ But with regard to the Combat Myth, emphasis should be put on the fact that the references to Yahweh's defeat of the monsters in vv. 13–15 is framed by the declaration of his kingship in v. 12: מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם. While the metanarrative may be that of establishing order from chaos, the narrative is of enemies being defeated by the king of the gods on behalf of his congregation (v. 2), in accord with the Amorite myth. Ps. 74 is surely one of the most striking examples of the Combat Myth in the Hebrew Bible, due to the sheer volume of key-phrases and ideas in the constellation of divine combat; the absence of a creation myth in the psalm only serves to *strengthen* the case.

According to Smith, Yahweh's triumph over Leviathan may have been understood as a combat myth, but only so far as it was used to explain the historical situation of the community using the text.¹⁴⁹² Lipiński likewise saw a correlation between the victory in mythology and a victory of Israel over its historical enemies.¹⁴⁹³ It is not unheard of for historical events to be projected into mythology, but pinpointing the actual historical events which would correspond with the myth is an extremely difficult task – insomuch as the origins of the Combat Myth seem to predate ancient Israel by quite a few centuries. Of course, the association of historical battles and myths of combat may be a recurring element in their narration, meaning that the myth could be recalled whenever the community required it – but this does not mean that a correlation with historical events necessarily follows.

According to Day, nothing in the text itself suggests that Leviathan (and Behemoth) exist merely as symbolic references to alien nations.¹⁴⁹⁴ Claiming that Leviathan (and Behemoth) merely symbolically refers to Egypt is certainly overstating any argument, but likewise to claim that they had no association with Egypt seems disingenuous, insofar as Leviathan has been likened unto a crocodile

¹⁴⁹⁰ Day 2000, 103.

¹⁴⁹¹ Wyatt 2003, 151.

¹⁴⁹² Smith 2001a, 39.

¹⁴⁹³ Lipiński 1965, 122–135.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Day 2000, 103.

and Behemoth to the hippopotamus (I discuss the evidence of P.Sallier in this regard in section 6.5). But the concept of a ‘multiplicity of answers’ may be applied here, as multiple readings of the texts existing simultaneously. Leviathan could well recall the roles of hostile nation, geographic river, and the enemy of the Storm-God all at the same time.

As to the other Ugaritic texts, it is uncertain whether the *glm ym* of the Keret-narrative (KTU 1.14–1.16) is connected to Yamm, or if it even means the sea. The text says that the ‘youth (of the) Sea’ took Keret’s sixth son; I take this to mean that the son drowned. The fifth son was taken by Resheph, implying that he died of a plague. This may go to show that it was not always necessary in the Ugaritic texts to differentiate between the physical manifestation of the sea and the anthropomorphic deity. Dietrich & Loretz translate the term as a reference to the solar eclipse, “die Finsternis des Tages”, as did some of the earlier commentators, but few scholars have picked up on this interpretation.¹⁴⁹⁵ While the mythological connotations of the phrase are thus unclear, the function in the text is evident: *glm ym* is the cause of death of the son of Keret.

The word for sea also features prominently in the text called Birth of the Gracious Gods (KTU 1.23),¹⁴⁹⁶ but there it seems to refer to the actual sea and have little to do with Yamm or the concept of the Combat Myth. The text is a mythological narrative concerning the conception and birth of El’s progeny by two goddesses.¹⁴⁹⁷ The sea is featured in many different constructions in the text. On line 63, reference is made to the fish of the sea, *dg b ym*, paralleling the birds of the sky. On lines 33–34, it seems to be used to describe the size of El’s manhood: *yd.il.k ym*, “the ‘hand’ of El is like the sea”, referring to the phallus of El. A note must be made of the concurrence of the hand and the sea in the idiom.

There is an interesting connection between the sea and potency in the Babylonian *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (“I will praise the Lord of Wisdom”), which has

¹⁴⁹⁵ Dietrich & Loretz 1999, 151; Gaster 1947; Gray 1963.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Albright (1934) was among the first to comment on the text published by Virolleaud.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Albright (1934, 133) did not see the text as one continuous narrative. According to him, the first 28 lines represented ‘extracts’ or the first lines of passages which had not been preserved in full, texts that had been “preserved in a kind of abstract”. He found in the beginning of the text nine distinct quotations which were separated by horizontal lines. Lines 30–75, on the other hand, seemed to him to form a continuous narrative due to the connection of ideas between the parts and the absence of the horizontal lines at the beginning of the tablet. He is probably right that this sort of recording of first lines only would have happened in cultures which orally transmitted narratives, and we should certainly expect this technique to have been used more in the non-epistolary Ugaritic texts. Of course, this makes the extraction of coherent narratives out of the ancient texts all the more difficult.

been described as a ‘psalm of thanksgiving’ to Marduk, and the ‘Babylonian Job’.¹⁴⁹⁸ In Si 55 8’–10’ we find the following cures to various ailments:

<i>is-kip la-maš-tu šá-da-a uš-te-e[š-šir]</i>	He overthrew the lamaštu-demon, abandon[ing it] to the mountain;
<i>a-gu-ú ta-ma-tu šu-ru-up-pa-a ú-šam-h[ir]</i>	in the flood of the sea he replac[ed] the cramp,
<i>i-šid lu-ú-tu it-ta-saḥ ki-ma šam-m[i]</i>	he tore up the root of impotence like a pla[nt]

The text offers an interesting contrast to KTU 1.83, which has often been interpreted as Yamm being bound to a mountain. In the Babylonian text, however, it is sickness and evil spirits which are bound to the mountains and the sea, rather than the sea itself being bound. These types of texts should probably be read against the later local traditions collected by Canaan (1922) on the folk beliefs of evil spirits inhabiting water courses.

The construction *agzrym bn ym* is featured multiple times in KTU 1.23: on lines 23 (partially reconstructed), 58–59, and 61. The translation of Lewis seems to assume that *agzrym* is a dual form,¹⁴⁹⁹ but as the meaning of the particle *bn* is ‘between’ one thing and another, it would make sense to parse the sentence *agzr ym bn ym* in spite of a lack of word divider between *agzr* and *ym*. This is further supported by l. 63, which features the construction *l <g>zr [.] y’d b.u ymm*. The translation of the phrase is no simple feat, even though the context is unbroken and the words are known. Albright chose to translate the lines as “I shall set apart a day (when) the sons of the sea (?) shall take vengeance on [...]”.¹⁵⁰⁰ Dussaud interpreted the term as El splitting the sea in twain.¹⁵⁰¹ I am not certain there is enough in the context to even warrant interpreting the word as ‘sea’ rather than ‘day’, considering that in the Ugaritic texts the word for day is often doubled within a verse, and with the subject of the text being the divinities Dawn and Dusk. A ‘division of one day from another’ would make sense in the context. Of course, if we consider the worldview in which a heavenly sea reflected and paralleled the earthly sea, then the concepts of separating one day from the next and separating the upper sea from the sea beneath may not be as distinct as we may think.

KTU 1.23 line 63 is one of the occurrences of the word *ym* to clearly reference the sea as a natural phenomenon in the Ugaritic texts, mentioning *wdg.bym*, ‘the fish of the sea’. The text also features the parallelism of *ym* and *thm*

¹⁴⁹⁸ Gilbert 1984, 284.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Lewis 1997, 209: “paired devourers of the day that bore them”.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Albright 1934, 136.

¹⁵⁰¹ Dussaud 1937, 61.

(KTU 1.23:30)¹⁵⁰² and *ym* and *mdb* (KTU 1.23:33–35), but the bicolon seems to refer to the physical seashore rather than the divinity. The character of Yamm is not paralleled by *thm* as such. If anything, the parallel pairs in KTU 1.23 warn us not to read too much into every case of parallel pairs consisting of words of known mythological provenance. Of course, it is possible that the text alludes to the god Yamm, but there seems to be little evidence for this. Even in the Baal Cycle itself, the sea can be used in the sense of a non-personalized body of water, such as in KTU 1.3 II 7–8, where the sea features as the cardinal direction west.

Parallelism between the rivers and the abyss is featured in the snakebite incantation of KTU 1.100, already discussed in section 5.1.5. In line 3 we read:

<i>il mbk nhrm</i>	(to) El / the god of the confluence of the rivers,
<i>b 'dt thmtm</i>	in the congregation of the deeps

The lines have usually been read in light of the depiction of El's abode in the Baal Cycle, where he is said to live "at the springs of the rivers, amid the streams of the deeps" (*mbk nhrm, qrb apq thmtm*), e.g. in KTU 1.3 V 6–7.¹⁵⁰³ While the lines in KTU 1.100 are inarguably similar, the identification of the figure in the above text as El¹⁵⁰⁴ should not be taken for granted. In light of some iconographic evidence which I will examine in the next chapter, I must pose the question of whether in this instance the word may be translated simply with the general term for 'god', in the sense of "to the god of the confluence of the rivers" or "the god that is at the source of the rivers, at the congregation of the deeps", referring to Yamm rather than El.¹⁵⁰⁵

Nahar is referred to as *il (nhr il rbm*, usually translated as "River, the great god")¹⁵⁰⁶ in KTU 1.3 III 39, and it is quite possible to interpret the parallel, and

¹⁵⁰² According to Tugendhaft 2010, 699, this parallelism is found nowhere else in the Ugaritic texts.

¹⁵⁰³ The line also appears in KTU 1.4 IV 21–22, where it seems to point to the abode of El; here it could just as well refer to the abode of Yamm as to that of El. It must also be noted that El's "mountain of assembly" is never described in these terms. The question of why El's abode is described in such aquatic terms has not been sufficiently answered, nor has his relationship with Yamm/Nahar been explained.

¹⁵⁰⁴ As done by Smith 1994b, 225, albeit with proper cause. He also suggests that the difference between the formulations might indicate that KTU 1.100 locates El's abode at the meeting place of the "two cosmic oceans", the Upper and the Lower sea, rendering the usual terrestrial language of El's domicile in "cosmological terms". An abode at the meeting place of the heavenly and the earthly sea should surely be the location of the abode of Yamm.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Parker (1989, 19) states that while the single word epithet (DN + epithet) is by far the most common in Ugaritic texts, sometimes epithets do consist of more than one word (e.g. DN + epithet + attribute). Cf. also Ps. 104:3, in which it is Yahweh who lays "the beams of [his] upper chambers in the waters", reminiscent of the image of the abode upon the waters discussed here.

¹⁵⁰⁶ In KTU 1.100 we also find mention of an *adn ilm rbm*, which has been translated as "lord of

rather obscure, construction *mdd il ym* as referring to ‘the god Yamm’, presenting us with a chiasmus of members (*a* is to *c* as *c*’ is to *a*’), which perhaps can be translated as “the beloved god, Sea”.¹⁵⁰⁷ The tone of Anat may perhaps be interpreted as mocking in both cases. On the other hand, the list may simply have contained the names of rivers, as discussed earlier. Smith suggested the translation “Nahar, God of the Great Waters” for *nhr il rbm*.¹⁵⁰⁸ Other possibilities are, for example, “great River of El”, “Nahar, the pre-eminent god”, and “River of the mighty gods”. It may also, as I have suggested, refer to the patron deity of the Eleutheros, Nahr al-Kebir.

This interpretation of Yamm’s epithet may be corroborated by the fact that *mdd* and *il* fall on different lines in the text; the scribe could easily have continued over the side of the tablet as he had a few lines previously (several lines, especially 32 and 36 run much longer than line 38) had he felt that *mdd* and *il* were more closely associated than *il* and *ym*. While the word dividers are before *mdd* and after *ym*, surrounding and enclosing the epithet, suggesting that the three words do form a chain of some sort, this line-division and the antithetic parallelism of the couplet suggest that *il*, in both instances, refers not to El, but to Yamm himself. Based on the evidence of the *dwd*-root discussed previously, it could be suggested that *mdd* and *rbm* both function as titles, especially since nowhere in the Baal Cycle do these titles coincide with the other titles of Yamm, *zbl* and *tp̄t*. The terms *mdd* and *rbm* may have formed a parallel epithet pair to *zbl* and *tp̄t*, as *mdd* and *zbl/tp̄t* are nowhere found in conjunction.

Disregarding the occurrence of *mlk.nhr* in the broken text of KTU 1.9:17,¹⁵⁰⁹ Yamm is not called by the title of *mlk* in any of the Ugaritic texts, which suggests that the titles *mdd* and *rbm* should not be understood as the titles

the many gods”, e.g. Pardee 2002, 170–172 and “the Lord of the Great Gods” by Stieglitz 2002, 211, who further associates the epithet with Ditanu, the divinized ancestor/founder of the dynasty of Ugarit.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Vaughn 1993, 426, interpreted the name as a construct chain epithet with *mdd il* “the beloved of El” followed by the personal name *ym*. Vaughn also shows how the chain epithet + personal name and personal name + chain epithet constructions are both possible in Ugaritic texts. However, in the case of the epithet name + construct chain epithet, which is what I propose as a possible interpretation of KTU 1.100:3, the epithet name always preceded the construct chain epithet. Ginsberg 1935, 329, already thought that the relationship between the words *ym* and *il* was problematic and suggested that *nhr* and *ym* act as common nouns in the construct state.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Smith 2009, 247.

¹⁵⁰⁹ It also features the combination of the words *zbl b’l*, but whether we are to understand Baal as having the title of *zbl* here is impossible to determine due to the broken lines. The epithet *zbl b’l* is found six times in the Ugaritic texts. Whether the storm-god Baal, the ‘baal’ of Saphon, was understood as having this title is unclear in cases other than the epithet *zbl b’l ar̄s*.

of a reigning monarch.¹⁵¹⁰ Although I have discussed the use of circumlocutions (or *Ersatz* names) in referring to the king as a way of protecting him from evil influence elsewhere in the dissertation, I am inclined to interpret the semantic cluster *mdd*, *ydd*, *hdd*, *dd*, and even *dwd*, all broadly meaning “the beloved of the divinity who acts as the protector of kingship” as referring to the crown-prince, (i.e. the chosen one, but not yet *the* one), as knowing the identity of the next person in the line of succession is an important factor contributing to the stability of a dynasty. And it was not only the use of epithets that were meant to protect the king from evil influence. Gurney discussed a Hittite ceremony of installing a false or substitute king. The false monarch was supposed to act as a decoy for the actual king was given a royal name so that the demonic forces would attack him in lieu of the actual king. Such beliefs may underlie not only the five separate names of the Egyptian pharaoh, but the circumlocution (e.g. referring to the king as a shepherd or a builder) used for the king throughout the ANE.¹⁵¹¹

Beckman translated a bronze tablet from the Hittite imperial period from Carchemish, which highlights the importance of the role of the crown-prince during the time of the writing of these texts:

Concerning the Great Throne (of Hatti), his protocol shall be the same as that of the kings of the land of Carchemish. Only the crown prince shall be greater than the king of the land of Tarhuntassa; no one else shall be greater than he. Whatever royal ceremonial is allowed to the king of the land of Carchemish shall also be allowed to the king of the land of Tarhuntassa.¹⁵¹²

The Hittites adopted many Amorite traditions upon their conquest of the Amorite kingdoms, among which was the importance of the crown-prince, the *elected* successor of the monarch, a concept that was most likely shared by the Ugaritians. This is why I suggest that rather than being merely alternative titles to *zbl* and *tpt*, the title of *rbm* especially suggests that *rbm* and *mdd* are a step above and higher in status than the more usual titles of Yamm. My solution for the problem of the titles is that they identify him either as crown-prince or king-elect, and therefore there is a temporal distinction between the use of the titles *zbl* and *tpt*, which occur before the election, and *mdd* and *rbm*, which follow the bestowal of El’s

¹⁵¹⁰ In fact, this type of use might be corroborated by Šamši-Adad using the title ‘prince of Mari’ (*ru-ba ma-ri^{ki}*) in A.O.39.7, as he was unable to claim the title of *šarru* for some reason, which I have suggested was due to the patronage and sponsorship that the king of Yamhad withheld from him. If the Ugaritic *rbm* was the title of a prince and *mdd* the title of the crown-prince, the usage of the different titles for the contenders for kingship becomes more understandable.

¹⁵¹¹ Gurney 1958, 118. Rituals for installing a substitute king (“which obliged the monarch actually to step down from the throne while someone else took his place and thus took the evil upon himself”) may also have existed in Mesopotamia. Talon 2005b, 99.

¹⁵¹² Beckman 1996, 113.

favour and sponsorship.

While the word *zbl* is often translated as ‘prince’, the semantic field of the word should be examined more closely.¹⁵¹³ While the root *zbl* often indicates rulership of some kind, the root also signifies carrying,¹⁵¹⁴ being probably the primary meaning from which the princely aspects have been derived (whether from carrying a mitre, cloth, or sceptre, or being raised above one’s peers). The combination of *zbl ym* as a parallel for the epithet ‘Judge River’ is also curious if one connects this to Strabo’s noxious lake-sea near which judicial proceedings took place, comparing it with Heimpel’s theory of the bitumen wells, which were meant to ‘carry’ the innocent ordealists, discussed in section 4.4.

The parallelism of *zbl ym* and *tp̄ nhr* could contain both the aspects of the river as judiciary and the sea/lake that carries judgement.¹⁵¹⁵ While the passing of judgement is the domain of the king, perhaps Baal’s subjugation of his enemy is the source and legitimation of his right to act as judge. Baal did not attain kingship until he had defeated Yamm; it was by means of the act of defeating Yamm that kingship became his. The building of palaces, arranging feasts, battling Mot, El’s favour – all of these things followed the act of wrestling his kingship from Yamm with the beating he gave the sea with his weapons. What Baal took from Yamm was both the right to rule and the right to judge, and the ideas of ruling and judging seem to be embedded in both of Yamm’s epithets.

If Yamm was regarded as the protector of horses, as was the case with the Hellenistic sea-god Poseidon, it would make sense for the god to feature as the

¹⁵¹³ Albright (1936, 17–18) reviewed the different formations of the stem זָבַל in HB texts. It appears in Is. 63:15, 1 Kgs 8:13/2 Chr. 6:2, Hab. 3:10 and Gen. 30:20 (and it also appears in Ps. 49:14, which he failed to mention). While these examples may support his thesis of the meaning of the Ugaritic appellation as something elevated, and they may serve as examples of the NWS mythological vocabulary used in Biblical texts (especially in the cases of Ps. 49 and Hab. 3), they do not appear in connection with the sea, and they have little bearing on the Combat Myth. The case of Hab. 3 is in close proximity to such a constellation, but the reference is in connection with the Moon, and *yrh* is one of several divinities in the Ugaritic texts to bear the appellation *zbl* (e.g. KTU 1.19 IV 2).

¹⁵¹⁴ Albright (1932, 191; 1936, 17) deciphered it as a passive participle of the stem with the meaning of raising and carrying, translating it as ‘exalted’. See Held 1968 for discussion on the root in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hebrew.

¹⁵¹⁵ In fact, Canaan 1922 saw an inherent dualism in the supernatural beings inhabiting water courses: some of them being haunted by demons and others inhabited by saints, while some were actually thought to contain both good and evil spirits. Neither does he suggest that all sources of water were haunted by evil spirits; the requirements for haunting were that the water course be in a deserted place and that the rays of the sun could not reach it (p. 5). On p. 9 he mentions several cases of benevolent spirits either extracting victims or saving them from drowning, a notion that could contain echoes of the conceptual thinking behind the Ordeal. The water courses seemed to function as a kind of battle field. On p. 18 he writes: “In some periodical springs battles and wars take place regularly and periodically between good and bad spirits”; on p. 6 he suggested that this view was a “very old idea in Semitic religions”.

first addressee of the supplication of KTU 1.100. El, as a *deus otiosus*, probably would not have featured as the primary recipient (the sun, Shapshu, who is addressed throughout the text, is the messenger who is supposed to carry the supplication to the “god at the source of the rivers”, not the recipient of the supplication).¹⁵¹⁶ It is the connection between the god Yamm and horses, as well as his absence in the list of gods that seems to both come down vertically from heaven to earth and spread geographically along the major cult centres of the divinities, which allows us to entertain the identity of the first recipient as Yamm. Note that Dagan, who has been likened unto El, is the third recipient, after Baal.

The theory that El was the deposed ruler of the gods is based on the pioneering study of Pope (1955), who suggested that the god’s younger rival Baal exiled him to his current watery underground domain. According to Pope, El was the head of the Ugaritic pantheon both in title and in actuality, before being supplanted by the new addition to the pantheon, the storm-god Baal, who took over the symbols of El’s kingship, like his mountain abode of Saphon. El then tried to use Yamm to fight against Baal’s usurpation. This is quite an imaginative reading of the text of the Baal Cycle, and it confuses the mythical narrative with the history of ancient NWS religion.

Of course, it is possible that the myth reflected the development of the religion in the area, but I do not think that the myth itself provides enough evidence to conclude that an El-type god was necessarily ousted, replaced, or deposed by a Baal-type god. Both divinities have their own specific functions in the mythological narrative (the fact that the old king must be replaced by the new king is intrinsic in the very concept of monarchy), and it also seems that they filled different niches in the Old Semitic pantheon.¹⁵¹⁷ While in the mythological *narrative* the young king must depose the old king, this does not necessitate that Baal was a newcomer to the Ugaritic pantheon, or that El was no longer considered an active god, somehow having been replaced by Baal in Ugaritic religion. The Storm-God was the dynastic god of the Amorites, and El was the father and creator of all that exists.

It is also possible that incantations of this sort may have wrought their influence on the poetry of the probably younger text of the Baal Cycle, especially

¹⁵¹⁶ The god has been interpreted as El by all commentators, see e.g. Dietrich & Loretz 1980, 154; De Moor 1987, 147; del Olmo Lete 1992, 242; Wyatt 1998, 379.

¹⁵¹⁷ Studied, e.g. by Stieglitz 1990.

KTU 1.3 III 23–25, which features vocabulary similar to the incantation, or in which an older incantation has been embedded in the narrative of the text. So why then would the name of Yamm not have been openly mentioned in the text of the incantation? Perhaps for a reason similar to why the names of Hadad and Yahweh eventually fell out of use – in this context of petitioning for protection for animals sacred to the sea-god, the god’s name may have been thought of as too sacred or magically dangerous to invoke, a common enough occurrence when it comes to invocations. For reasons of their inviolability, divine names often fell out of use and were replaced by epithets and circumlocutions.¹⁵¹⁸ The ancient user of the invocation also knew exactly which god was meant by the “god at the centre of the rivers”. He may not even have conceived of Yamm as the god’s proper name in the same way that we do. Whether or not Yamm was invoked by the incantation of 1.100, it is again important to note the connection that the god had with equines, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

It must be stressed that the texts from Ugarit, although forming one of the richest deposits of NWS mythological texts discovered to date, give us only a small glimpse of the religion and mythology of the people. And as they are written texts, produced by the literate elite for their use,¹⁵¹⁹ they do not provide great insight into popular religion, which must have used some of the same characters and themes that we find in the texts. The same holds true for the majority of the HB, whose sophisticated literary texts were written by and for the elite, who were also responsible for their preservation, redaction, and trading. Dever, for example, believed that in its final form, the Book of Psalms is almost entirely the work of the priestly elite of Jerusalem and a product of the royal Davidic theology.¹⁵²⁰ Dever took as obvious that the dominant scribal tradition was royalist instead of ‘populist’, and that only the tradition of the royalist school has been passed on to us.¹⁵²¹ But as we do not know the specific societal and cultural conditions under which the texts were written, authored, and possibly commissioned, it is difficult to draw inferences regarding the mythology and the underlying ideology of the elite, as well as the way in which the establishment used the texts. We also have

¹⁵¹⁸ Redford 1992, 45.

¹⁵¹⁹ By this I do not mean to imply that every member of the elite possessed the skill of reading, but that they had *access* to the texts.

¹⁵²⁰ Dever 1990, 122–123. The theology has been discussed by Spieckermann 1989, according to whom the salvation of god is both the driving problem and the solution to the problem, presented in a kind of duality or through negatives.

¹⁵²¹ Dever 1990, 122–123. Also Mowinckel 2004, 204, according to whom the texts originated in scholarly circles.

very little information on the cult of Ugarit and how these texts related to it. This is why the use of iconography in the city of Ugarit may give us insights into the mythology, which is lacking or merely implicit in the texts.

5.3 The Sea of Combat Myth and Iconography from Ugarit

This chapter contains a brief introduction to the iconographic representation of the sea of the Combat Myth in the Syro-Palestinian area. There are three pieces of iconographic evidence from Ugarit that have bearing on the topic of this dissertation. Pictorial representations of Yamm are few and far between, and even the ones that could ostensibly be associated with the sea-god mostly have extremely tenuous links. The problem with depictions of a god associated with a physical element like the sea is that they can alternate between anthropomorphic representations and depictions of the element itself.

The foremost of these possible representations of Yamm and the Combat Myth is in the so-called *Baal au foudre* or the *Grand stele du Baal* (RS 4.427),¹⁵²² which has been interpreted as the Storm-God standing on wavy lines representing either water or mountains. The interpretation of water may be suggested by a similar motif of two parallel wavy lines with four peaks, each stationed under a ship, clearly representing water in a Sidonian coin from the 5th century,¹⁵²³ yet it is also possible to interpret the upper register of the stele as representing mountains and the lower register as representing the sea.¹⁵²⁴ It has been suggested that the smaller figure in the stele represents either a smaller (apotropaic) helper-divinity or the king. There are several reasons why the latter identification should be preferred. In Egyptian iconography we find several depictions of the king smiting an enemy, and it is rather apparent that Egyptian art and iconography influenced Ugaritic depictions. In these Egyptian reliefs, the most famous of which is the so-called Narmer Palette (or the Great Hierakonpolis Palette, EA35714), the smaller figure accompanying the king is actually his sandal-bearer,¹⁵²⁵ situated behind the king (in the Narmer palette the Pharaoh is in the

¹⁵²² Yon 1991.

¹⁵²³ Jidejian 1992, 187.

¹⁵²⁴ An interpretation of the pattern as mountain tops was advanced, e.g. by Williams-Forte 1983, 36–39.

¹⁵²⁵ Ornan 2011, 261.

same smiting position as the Storm-God in the Ugaritic stele), whereas the figure in the Ugaritic stele is in front of the god and enclosed, as if inside the protective ‘frame’ in the space created by the figure of the god and his weapon.

Ornan suggested that the stele was not in fact the main cult image of the temple (as it was found outside of the temple compound and because the divinity is in a combatant rather than an enthroned position), but a dedication erected by an Ugaritic king, “probably the one depicted on the stele”. Ornan did not connect the Ugaritic figure to the sandal-bearer of the Narmer palette.¹⁵²⁶ On the basis of the other stele found in the temple of Baal (RS 2.037), which displays obvious Egyptian iconography, it could well be that the *Baal au foudre* stele reflects Egyptian influence. What is notable is that in Egyptian depictions of the smiting scene, the pharaoh is always grabbing the hair of his adversary, but in the Ugaritic stele the adversary is *in absentia*.¹⁵²⁷ This supports an interpretation of the enemy of the god as the lines under his feet pierced by his weapon, whether they are to be interpreted as the sea or the mountains. The other, less famous stele resembles the *Baal au foudre*, but the figure in it bears the Egyptian feather-crown instead of the horned mitre.¹⁵²⁸ It is important to note that before the time of the 19th dynasty, the Egyptian army was not depicted in iconographic sources, meaning that the figure of the pharaoh stood not only for himself, but for the armies and the land of Egypt. This may have been true of the Syrian sources as well, with the ‘smiting god’ representing and symbolizing not only the king, but the kingdom itself, triumphing over its enemies represented by the roiling sea.¹⁵²⁹

The interpretation of the smaller figure as the king is based on the position of his arm, raised in a gesture which has been interpreted as one of blessing.¹⁵³⁰ This gesture of a raised hand could also be a sign of omnipotence. According to L’Orange, the stretching out of the right hand “in the magic gesture of omnipotence” was deeply rooted in ANE religions.¹⁵³¹ He may be correct in taking the gesture of the upheld hand as a gesture of power rather than as a gesture

¹⁵²⁶ Ornan 2011, 278.

¹⁵²⁷ For the smiting scene in Egyptian iconography, see Luiselli 2011.

¹⁵²⁸ Albeit according to Cornelius & Niehr (2004, 30) the figure does sport a horn on its forehead.

¹⁵²⁹ Frankfort 1948, 49.

¹⁵³⁰ Such gestures are often interpreted as signs of benediction, but as L’Orange (1953, 139–140) pointed out, this meaning for the outstretched hand did not necessarily arise until the Middle Ages, as authorized by the Church. The older “sign of salvation” was, according to him, an expression of the magic powers of the king and a “primeval magical sign of power in the East”.

¹⁵³¹ L’Orange 1953, 92–93. On p. 145 he writes: “Through the emperor, manifesting his power in this gesture, divine interference in human affairs takes place. Actually it is the gods themselves who in this gesture intervene in the sphere of mortals”.

of blessing, which is how the raised right hand has usually been interpreted. If the smaller figure is identified as the king, the interpretation of the raised hand as symbolic of power could even support the association of the king and the Storm-God in the stele. Especially in Achaemenid iconography it was common for the king to be represented as the god and below the god, such that the image of the king was doubled.¹⁵³²

The king's figure was a repetition of the divine model. The double representation of the king with divine characteristics and the king without divine characteristics was an expression of the relationship of earthly kingship and divine or "heavenly" kingship.¹⁵³³ This concept could also be featured in the Ugaritic stele. Ornan offered an interesting observation that the hand gesture made by the smaller figure in the Ugaritic stele is the same as the hand gesture made by the statue of the enthroned Baal from Hazor. Since the seated Baal probably symbolizes Baal as king, it follows that the smaller figure – as it cannot symbolize Baal in the stele – probably symbolizes the king. Ornan called the figure in the stele the "worshiping king". She pointed out that a similar figure of a king with his right hand lifted is found on a clay stand from the Temple of Rhytons at Ugarit.¹⁵³⁴

It must be emphasized that the weapons mentioned in the textual sources from Ugarit do not correspond exactly to the ones found in Ugaritic iconographic sources, which feature the club and the spear. While it is possible that the weapons portrayed in the *Baal au foudre* -stele served a specific iconographic function (as outlined in Töyräänvuori 2012), it may also be that the weapons on the Ugaritic stele alluded to similar, if not the very same, cultic weapons as those mentioned in the Mari texts. In the text of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, the weapons forged by the smith Kothar-wa-Ḫasis and wielded by Baal in the battle against Yamm were clubs (or *šmd*-weapons)¹⁵³⁵ called by the names *ygrš* and *aymr*, interpreted as "driver" and "chaser", respectively. De Moor described them as "automatically striking" weapons.¹⁵³⁶ Williams-Forte¹⁵³⁷ identified the so-called lightning-tree

¹⁵³² Cf. also the iconography of the king in the temple of the Storm-God on the Aleppo citadel.

¹⁵³³ See L'Orange 1953, 93 – although he is mainly discussing the sovereignty of the sun-god in the figure of the king.

¹⁵³⁴ Ornan 2011, 257.

¹⁵³⁵ Niehr 2014, 175. The specific meaning of the term has remained elusive. A bladed weapon of some kind (*ktp*) is also mentioned in KTU 1.6 V 2.

¹⁵³⁶ De Moor 1990, 86.

¹⁵³⁷ My examination of the theory of Williams-Forte is based mostly on her article, which was published in *Ancient Seals and the Bible*, ed. L. Gorelick. It claims to be based on her

not only in the Ugaritic *Baal au foudre* stele, in which the Storm-God is brandishing a branch-like weapon, but she also found mentions or allusions to the theme in certain Ugaritic texts.¹⁵³⁸

Niehr interpreted the seated god on the so-called El-stele from Ugarit as the storm-god Baal, based on the W-shaped object on the image. The W-shaped object is the symbol of the Storm-God in Hittite iconography; the stylized representation of the Luwian hieroglyph for the Storm-God, probably representing a lightning bolt.¹⁵³⁹ The stele of *Bēl-ḥarrān-bēli-ušur* from the 8th century BCE shows what could easily be interpreted as the king with the symbols of two weapons and the sign of the Storm-God. The deities symbolized by the images are mentioned in the inscription, and while the first weapon does symbolize the weather-god Marduk, the other weapon is in fact the stylus of Nabu. The winged disc sometimes associated with storm-gods like Marduk or Aššur is in the stele a symbol for the sun-god, Shamash. It is possible that the vegetal lightning-tree weapon is referred in a Kassite period Sumerian text BM 6060:24 from the Nippur temple, which mentions ^{giš}*ku-ma-nu 7 ū-mu ku* ^dAMAR UTU-*ak*, “the seven-pointed weapon of laurel wood, the storm of Marduk”. While the text is Sumerian, this particular line displays clear Semitic influence.¹⁵⁴⁰

In most of the Syrian and Anatolian stamp-seals studied by Williams-Forte, the Storm-God is seen standing on top of lines interpreted either as mountains or the sea,¹⁵⁴¹ perhaps alluding to the Combat Myth. Some steles, such as the ones displaying a weapon-wielding weather-god from Til-Barsib (Tell Ahmar in modern day Syria), also depict the god astride a lion standing on the waves of the sea (M.11611).¹⁵⁴² A cylinder seal (RS 17.158) originally from Tell

dissertation entitled “Mythic Cycles: The Iconography of the Gods of Water and Weather in Syria and Anatolia in the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000–1600 BCE)”. However, when I contacted Columbia University for a copy of this dissertation, their Dissertation Defense & Deposit staff stated that the dissertation was never deposited, which is why I cannot refer to it.

¹⁵³⁸ Also Ornan 20122, 269: “The association between a male divinity and a vegetal symbol is found in Syrian and Anatolian Middle Bronze glyptics, where the Storm-God is often shown holding a tree, a branch, or a flower, and similar depictions are found further south in Canaanite imagery of the MBA. This artistic tradition passed into the LBA, expressed in Mitannian cylinder seals by stylized trees that probably replaced the anthropomorphic representation of the Storm-God”. See also Lambert 1985a, 437.

¹⁵³⁹ Niehr 1992, 293–300; Hawkins 1992, 53–82.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Langdon 1919, 340. The Sumerian UD means both ‘day’ and ‘storm’, but the Akkadian *ū-mu* used here would not ordinarily refer to a storm.

¹⁵⁴¹ Williams-Forte 1976, (fig 34); 1983, 39, 40–41 (figs. 1–2, 10–11); 1993, 187 (figs. 4, 7); Pritchard 1954, 69. (fig. 224) has the weather-god vaulting three mountains, so the symbolism of their number is an unresolved question. In a 18th–17th century cylinder seal from Syria the god-figure is actually standing both on the snake and on the two mountains. Keel 1972, fig. 46.

¹⁵⁴² “A frieze of twisted design”; Pritchard 1954, 179, (figs. 531 & 532). Such patterns or

el-Dab'a (place of the ancient Hyksos capital of Avaris) shows a scene which is very familiar from many Syrian and Anatolian cylinder seals. It features the god Ini-Teshub, whose seal has also been found from the city of Ugarit, standing on two mountain tops above the guilloche of water. The seal suggests that the Syrian tradition was known in Egypt at least to some extent.¹⁵⁴³ It follows that the same iconographic motif should also have been known in the area of Palestine, located halfway between Egypt and Syria. There may well have been symbolic overlap between the motifs of the mountains and the sea, and they do in fact feature as parallel pairs in several instances of Biblical poetry.¹⁵⁴⁴

But even if we interpret the semi-circles as representing mountain tops rather than the actual sea or a serpent, Wyatt has suggested a connection between the sacred mountain of the storm-god Baal (Saphon) and his adversary Yamm. He proposed that Saphon may actually be a title or alternative name for the monstrous Yamm, and that it is out of the carcass of his defeated foe that the Storm-God fashions his mountain throne.¹⁵⁴⁵ In Hittite art, the storm-god Teshub was also often depicted as standing on two mountain gods, named Hazzi and Namni, the former of which has been associated with Mount Saphon and is also mentioned by name in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁵⁴⁶ One of the first to examine the mountain's role in this mythology was Eissfeldt, who associated the mountains of Saphon and Casius.¹⁵⁴⁷ Kramer pointed out that in all of the Sumerian myths of divine combat, the name of the adversary (or 'dragon', in his terminology) was KUR (the mountain). This dragon called the mountain was defeated by the storm-god Ninurta, by the goddess Inanna, and by the water-god Enki (it is the version with Enki that Kramer thought "the more original" of the three, in spite of the fact that it is only partially preserved in a later copy of the Gilgamesh epic) in different iterations of the myth. As the slaying of the Kur results in the waters rising to the earth's surface and destroying the vegetation, it is possible that it is a

guilloches – a staple of the art of Syrian seals according to Collon 1975, 193 – are often interpreted as depicting something other than water, such as braids or ornamental filler. A similar pattern clearly indicating liquid can, however, be found (e.g. in a stele depicting Aššurbanipal II pouring a libation). Pritchard 1954, 205 (fig. 626). Seyrig 1960, 240, however, associated the guilloche generally with the element of water.

¹⁵⁴³ Alexander 1993, 9; cylinder and stamp-seals of Ini-Teshub the king of Carchemish have also been found at Ugarit featuring a storm-god.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Ps. 46:3: "And that is why we shall not fear the changing of the earth or the moving of mountains to the heart of the seas".

¹⁵⁴⁵ Wyatt 2005d, 112–113.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Lambert 1985a, 443. Alexander 1993, 1; Stieglitz 1990, 79.

¹⁵⁴⁷ In his seminal work *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasius und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer* [Halle: Niemeyer, 1932].

personification of the Flood. Kur may have had a connection to the subterranean waters, but it had no association with the (Mediterranean) sea.¹⁵⁴⁸

While Williams-Forte has interpreted similar motifs of mountains and serpentine creatures in some Anatolian cylinder seals as representing the NWS god of death (Mot, another one of the Storm-God's adversaries), this interpretation of the mounds on which the Storm-God stands has received some criticism.¹⁵⁴⁹ Lambert argues that even if the male figure in the depictions is standing on water, the mountains, or a serpentine creature, the naturalistic or non-anthropomorphic depiction of the creature does not provide any clue as to its name or identity. Lambert further pointed out that we cannot and should not conflate all of the Storm-God's mythic enemies into one single hostile entity, and I am inclined to agree.¹⁵⁵⁰ It is unclear whether the Yamm of Ugaritic myth was ever seen as a serpent or dragon, as Yamm was probably a representation of the Mediterranean Sea and serpents, symbolizing rivers, did play the part of the Storm-God's adversary in some local traditions, encouraging the conflation of the symbolism.¹⁵⁵¹ It remains extremely difficult in most cases to come to definite conclusions as to which specific adversary is meant with which iconographic representation.¹⁵⁵²

It is also worth noting that in Mesopotamian iconography, a god ascending from between two mountains, or standing atop one of them, was associated particularly with the sun-god – the Sumerian Utu or the Akkadian Shamash – and the rising of the morning sun.¹⁵⁵³ The mountain on which the deity steps on in these images may also symbolize or represent the temple or the ziggurat, which the sun climbs as the day draws on.¹⁵⁵⁴ An interpretation of the

¹⁵⁴⁸ Kramer 1944, 78. Annus 2010, 102, suggests that it was because of this association of Kur and battle that the river ordeal later became associated with the mountain *huršan*.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Williams-Forte 1983, 36–39; Lambert 1985a, 444. Pritchard 1954, 168, also saw mountains in the wavy lines below Baal's feet in the *Baal au foudre* stele.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Lambert 1985a, 442. Smith (2001a, 32) pointed out that usually only benevolent deities were presented as anthropomorphic and that divine monsters were presented more in a zoomorphic fashion. The Ugaritic Yamm, it must be stated, features nothing in his descriptions in the Baal Cycle that would allow us to describe him as zoomorphic. Although he is not benevolent – and the same could be argued for Baal – his description includes many anthropomorphisms, and he seems in fact to have been depicted as an anthropomorphic figure in Syrian glyptic. See Matthiae 1992.

¹⁵⁵¹ Smith 2001a, 33, however, interprets the cosmic enemies of Baal and Anat as serpents and dragons.

¹⁵⁵² Van Henten 1999, 265, claims that in the ANE, destructive natural phenomena, such as floods and storms, were often associated with the symbol of the dragon. This is a broad claim, to be sure. But it does not seem as though the Amorites associated the storm with negative imagery.

¹⁵⁵³ But also with the moon-god Nanna/Sin.

¹⁵⁵⁴ E.g. Pritchard 1954, 220 (figs. 683, 684, 685), E.D. Van Buren 1945, 179–181. There is a

figure in the pictorial inscription as a solar deity should not be automatically discounted, as the city of Jerusalem has occasionally been associated with historical solar worship.¹⁵⁵⁵ The problem with this interpretation is that solar deities are not often paired with goddesses in ANE iconography. Alternatively, keeping with the solar motif, a suggestion could be made that the sherd actually features the twin gods Shahar and Shalim, the Dusk and the Dawn, who famously appear in the Ugaritic text KTU 1.23, discussed in the previous chapter. According to Alexander, figural images of the Anatolian Storm-God can be identified from 2000 BCE onwards, while images of a similar type are found in Mesopotamia from the 3rd millennium BCE onwards. In Anatolia, the stepping up from between two mountain peaks is characteristic of the Storm-God. Unlike in Mesopotamia, the Storm-God was a primary deity in Syria and Anatolia, where he ruled over the mountains or anthropomorphized mountain-gods, the image of which may have originated in Mesopotamia.¹⁵⁵⁶

The second piece of iconographic material bearing on the sea is in the form of an image on a bowl (RS 24.440), of an anthropomorphic figure flanked by two horses and fish, featuring the iconographic representations of fish, horse, and the sea in an offering scene. This brings us to the “horse-leader” motif, examined by Langdon in her 1989 *American Journal of Archaeology* article titled “The Return of the Horse Leader”. The horse-leader is a figure known from Argive geometric pottery and, according to Langdon, its most characteristic motif.¹⁵⁵⁷ The horse-leader motif of Mycenaean craters features a human figure flanked by horses and most often also with fish. It is the combination of horse and fish that is of interest with regard to Mediterranean Sea deities. Langdon presented several craters from the Eastern Mediterranean which display this motif, even connecting the aforementioned offering scene on the Ugaritic amphoroid crater with it.¹⁵⁵⁸ While beginning her argumentation by denying that the figure in the craters represents Poseidon, Langdon does come to the conclusion that it probably depicts

considerable amount of overlap between the Anatolian and Mesopotamian imagery. The stamp-seals feature similar characters in similar positions, but their interpretation and meaning seem to have been constructed differently. There are also some minute differences in the symbolism, such as the saw held by Shamash in the Mesopotamian images and the lightning-breath of the Storm-God in Syrian seal stamps, on which see Williams-Forte 1993.

¹⁵⁵⁵ May 1937; Taylor 1993; Smith 1990a.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Alexander 1993, 2–4.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Langdon 1989, 185.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Langdon 1989, 188.

a sea-god, and that the motif was adapted from local Syrian mythology.¹⁵⁵⁹

The view has also been put forward that Mari, in a trade-relationship with Crete, could actually have influenced the Knossos frescoes of the early 17th century BCE.¹⁵⁶⁰ Therefore, finding Syrian motifs on Aegean pottery is hardly surprising. It is this motif, and the later connection between Poseidon and horses in the cities of the Levantine littoral in the Hellenistic period, which hint at an earlier association between Yamm and horses. The motif can be seen, e.g. on the Tyrian tetradrachm from the 5th c. BCE, where the god Melqart is shown riding over the sea on a horse or a hippocamp, a winged horse with the tail of a serpent.¹⁵⁶¹ The hippocamp is also found on Byblian coins, such as the one from the reign of the 4th-century BCE King Adramelek, in which the winged horse is positioned under a ship, seeming to symbolize the ocean itself.¹⁵⁶²

There are also two bronze plaques of Northern Syrian origin found at the sites of Greek temples (Eretria and Samos).¹⁵⁶³ Dated to the 9th century BCE,¹⁵⁶⁴ these plaques, which seem to have been parts of a horse harness, have an identical inscription: “What Hadad has given to Lord Hazael from Umqi in the year of his crossing of the river” (זי/ש נתן הדד למראן חזאת מן עמק בשנת עדה מראן נהר). The name Hazael has been connected to Hazael, the king of Aram-Damascus (mentioned, e.g. in 1 Kgs. 19:15). Most likely the plaques commemorate Hazael’s crossing of the Orontes during a campaign, but the fact that the proposed votive objects were thought to have been given by the Storm-God to the king does connect them somewhat to the Mari letter. The proposed connection between Yamm and horses may also be relevant in this regard.

But the bronze plaques are not weapons (which one finds mentioned in the Mari letter), and any attempt to find a mythological interpretation for the “crossing of the river” cited in the plaques must remain highly speculative. It could be that the crossing of the river was seen as a feat of strength not unlike the reaching of the shore of the Mediterranean Sea was to the Mesopotamian kings, as otherwise there would be little occasion for mentioning or commemorating it on a plaque. The fact that the plaque seems to have been reproduced also suggests that

¹⁵⁵⁹ Langdon 1989, 201.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Malamat 1998, 36.

¹⁵⁶¹ Lipinski 2004, 428.

¹⁵⁶² Jidejian 1992, 60–61, 114.

¹⁵⁶³ One was found in the sanctuary of Hera at Samos, the other in the temple of the Eretrian Apollo at Euboea. Burkert 1992, 18; Eph’al & Naveh 1989, 192–200.

¹⁵⁶⁴ DAI 88/1022.

it was used as a symbol of royal authority and legitimacy. But we must be careful in over-analysing phrases like the “crossing of the river”, inasmuch as the place-name *Eber-nāri* of עבר נהרה (‘across the river’, usually designating the area of Syria from the perspective of Mesopotamia) may confuse the issue. Symbolically, the crossing of the river may have functioned similarly to the conquering of the sea, if on a smaller scale.

The association of the images of the neighing horse and the roiling sea is comprehensible, and makes even more sense when remembering that both horse and sea must be subjugated by the ruler. Horses were a royal animal,¹⁵⁶⁵ and the association makes sense with Yamm’s role as the mediator of kingship (which I will discuss shortly; I also examine the role of Poseidon in the later mythologies of the Eastern Mediterranean in section 6.3). In the text of the HB, the connection (albeit not association) between horse and sea is most apparent in Ex. 15:21, where Miriyam implores “Sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphed triumphantly: horse and its rider he threw into the sea!”¹⁵⁶⁶ The sea is also mentioned twice in Hab. 3:8¹⁵⁶⁷ and 3:15. Habakkuk contains an interesting wealth of vocabulary connected with the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, and it may feature traditions of the NWS Combat Myth. The connection of the text of Habakkuk to kingship is much more obscure, but perhaps it may be found in the metaphor of the non-blossoming fig-tree and the fruitless vines of v. 17.¹⁵⁶⁸ Hab. 3:8–10, 15 are a part of the same complex.

But there are more pertinent iconographic representations of Yamm from the Syrian area – which have not received their due attention over the years, as in excess to the well-argued article discussed next, Matthiae’s expertise in the field can hardly be doubted. In the typology devised by Matthiae (1992), he demonstrates that the divinity portrayed in the Old Syrian cylinder seals from the

¹⁵⁶⁵ On the horse, see the classic study by A. Salonen, *Hippologica Akkadica* [Helsinki: 1955] and, more recently and specifically from the Ugaritic perspective, Loretz 2011.

¹⁵⁶⁶ ותען להם מרים שירו ליהוה כִּי־גָאֹה גָאֹה כּוֹס וְרִכְבּוֹ רָמָה בָּיָם.

¹⁵⁶⁷ “Was it against the rivers, the rage of Yahweh? Or was your wrath against the river? Or was your anger *against the sea* when you rode on your horses and your chariots to victory? You uncovered your bow, sworn are the rods of the word (Ayyamarri?). Selah. You cleft the earth with rivers. The mountains have seen you and they tremble; the tempest of waters flows over, the deep utters its voice, and lifts up its hands on high [...] You *tread on the sea* with your horses, on the surge of the Great Waters”.

¹⁵⁶⁸ There may also be a vague reference to kingship in the obscure superscription שְׁגִינֹת, which might recall the equally obscure term שְׁגִינֹת לְדָוִד of Ps. 7:1, which is possibly a reference to an ecstatic song. BDB suggests that it could be a “wild, passionate song, with rapid changes of rhythm”. Ps. 7:1, however, connects it with the character of David, which could indicate an originally monarchic background for the psalm in Hab. 3.

2nd millennium BCE (MBA II),¹⁵⁶⁹ a winged male deity carrying a curved scimitar, represents the god Yamm.¹⁵⁷⁰ The figure is often misidentified as a goddess, as the pictorial representations of Ishtar in the Assyrian and Babylonian iconography contain similar symbols: wings and a curved sword.¹⁵⁷¹ Elements such as costume, headgear, insignia, weapons, symbolic animals, and positions of the figures, as well as the context in which they appear, can be used to identify individual deities in the glyptic. The winged deity which Matthiae identified as the god Yamm is “well defined in almost all of the above mentioned primary elements”. It also appears in “relatively unchangeable compositional patterns”, making the identification of the god as Yamm more solid than that of most deities.¹⁵⁷²

In addition to the curved scimitar and wings (two wings rising from the shoulders), the character wears a short, long-fringed skirt (decorated with horizontal stripes and closed with a belt) covering the back leg and a headdress with horizontally free-standing horns at the bottom and a high conical or cylindrical cap with a high central point. The wings are the most characteristic element, as there is no variation in their position, whereas the tiara has many different forms.¹⁵⁷³ The tiara of Yamm sometimes resembles that of Baal and sometimes that of Anat.¹⁵⁷⁴ The skirt worn by the divinity and the dagger sheathed at the belt were also derived from the canonical iconography of the Storm-God of Aleppo.¹⁵⁷⁵ Both of these factors link the character to the mythology of the Baal Cycle, and in fact they suggest the Aleppan origin of the mythology. The winged Yamm does not appear to have a symbolic animal. Although the curved scimitar is

¹⁵⁶⁹ Many of the seals come from Alalakh and Ebla. See Matthiae 1992 for bibliography.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Matthiae 1992, 175: “If the basic element for the characterization of the mythical role of the winged deity is the duel against Hadad, it seems possible to propose that the image of this god in the formulation of Old Syrian glyptic represents the god Yam of the mythical cycle of Ugarit”. On p. 187 he also pointed out that this is the only one of the winged deities in Old Syrian glyptic that is male.

¹⁵⁷¹ According to Matthiae 1992, 172, the figure is often confused even in the archaeological literature on Syrian glyptic with the armed nude goddess who is sometimes winged (the wings of the goddess derive from the “figure of the great goddess inside the winged shrine”; although Matthiae does not discuss it, this may have led to the later presentation of Ishtar with similar iconographic signs), even though the figure of Yamm has “clear enough autonomy in comparison with other figures of deities that are superficially comparable”. The skirt of the armed female deities that are not a derivation of the nude goddess are different from those of Yamm, who bears the “peculiar fringed one”. There is a note of chastisement in Matthiae’s communication.

¹⁵⁷² Matthiae 1992, 169.

¹⁵⁷³ Matthiae 1992, 169–170.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Matthiae 1992, 170.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Matthiae 1992, 171.

one of the most defining characteristics of the god, he also wields other weapons, such as spears or axes. Often the figure has a weapon in both hands.¹⁵⁷⁶

According to Matthiae, this conveys the (“unequivocal”) visual message of struggle, even in contexts where the figure is not taking part in struggle *per se*.¹⁵⁷⁷ There are three different kinds of scenes in which the figure appears: cultural schemes in front of a royal figure or two/three other praying figures, in front of an enthroned god accompanied by other deities in a mythical context, and, most importantly, in front of or facing off with the Storm-God, who is sometimes accompanied by Anat. The scene may also take place before an enthroned divinity.¹⁵⁷⁸ It is noteworthy that the idea of kingship is present in all three types of scenes, either in the figure of the king himself or in the figure of the enthroned divinity (“god characterized by majestic behaviour”).¹⁵⁷⁹ It is important to note that the winged deity is presented in mirror-image or opposite from the Storm-God, as this is a rare occurrence in Syrian glyptic. When facing off, both gods often brandish all of their weapons; according to Matthiae this represents the warlike impulse of both characters.¹⁵⁸⁰

Matthiae attempted to explain the winged nature of Yamm as symbolic of the sea as a primeval element, connecting it with representations of Tiamat as a winged dragon in Neo-Assyrian art of the 9th century, which would have been influenced by these older depictions.¹⁵⁸¹ But the younger zoomorphic images can hardly be used to explain the wings on an older anthropomorphic figure.¹⁵⁸² His solution is that both derive from “an ancient figurative tradition, according to which the primeval sea was represented as a winged deity”, of which no examples have apparently survived. My solution is different: in ancient Semitic cosmology,

¹⁵⁷⁶ Matthiae 1992, 171–172. Matthiae writes that the “strong curved weapon” appears more rarely than the spear, which is statistically speaking true of the figures provided by him. But with regard to the weapons of other male divinities in Syrian glyptic, the curved scimitar is much more easily recognizable.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Matthiae 1992, 172.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Matthiae 1992, 172–173.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Matthiae (1992, 173) pointed out the important relationship between Yamm and the royal figure in the first two types of scenes.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Matthiae 1992, 173. On p. 174 he described the figure as a protagonist of a duel against the Storm-God (with Anat or the enthroned god playing a secondary role), but the scene might just as well be described as the Storm-God playing the part of the protagonist and Yamm the part of the antagonist.

¹⁵⁸¹ Matthiae 1992, 177.

¹⁵⁸² Pritchard 1954, 218 (fig. 670) is an 8th-century BCE relief from Malatya in Turkey showing a god battling a serpent-dragon with a spear while another armed deity looks on, which at least witnesses to the existence of the iconographic motif of divine combat in this period. See also L. Delaporte: Malatya, Arslantepe I 1940, pl. 22,2; E. Herzfeld: *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II*, 1930, pl. 12; Bossert, *Anatolien 769*; A. Götze: *Kleinasien 1933*, fig. 13.

the sea was both above the dome of the sky as well as below, and there exist homographs (although not necessarily homophones) *ym-ym* and *nhr-nhr*, one of which refers to water and the other to light (which, it must be pointed out, always causes a reflection on the waters), or one to terrestrial waters and the other (by and large) to celestial waters. Therefore, as the domain of the sea is both surrounding the earth and above the dome of the sky, portraying the god of the sea as a winged divinity capable of traversing the distance between them makes perfect sense.

The depiction in Matthiae's fig. 20 is especially interesting. The image contains three figures: an enthroned deity (probably El), Yamm standing in front of the seated deity with his back to the throne and his weapons lowered, and a non-divine supplicant (unlike the other two, the supplicant does not wear a horned mitre) opposite Yamm with his hand raised in prayer or supplication.¹⁵⁸³ The supplicant seems to have two fish behind him, possibly representing a tribute he is bringing to El. Yamm is clearly in the function of a mediator in the image. There does not appear to be enough defining characteristics of the supplicant to conclude that it is a royal figure,¹⁵⁸⁴ but whether or not the mortal represents the king, Yamm is the go-between for the wealthy human and the father of the gods.¹⁵⁸⁵ Matthiae suggested that the supplicant figure only appears before great deities with a special relation to the protection of kinship.¹⁵⁸⁶ Although Matthiae's association of the images in the cylinder seals and the text of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle is a little too straightforward,¹⁵⁸⁷ the case he presents for interpreting this figure as Yamm in Old Syrian glyptic is nonetheless convincing.

Matthiae indeed pointed out that Yamm's connection with kingship is hardly astounding, based on textual evidence. He also claimed that Yamm is clearly a protector of kingship in the iconographic patterns of the Old Syrian glyptic.¹⁵⁸⁸ It is also important, as the glyptic may help elucidate certain obscure

¹⁵⁸³ Matthiae (1992, 174) has interpreted this as a "praying faithful" adoring the winged deity.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Matthiae (1992, 182), however, raises the possibility that the character is wearing a high oval tiara, which would suggest his royal identity, this being "the canonical figure of the king not only in the Yamhad milieu, but also in the kingdoms of Northern inner Syria". Compare the figure of the king with the 'sandal-bearer' figure in the *Baal au foudre* -stele.

¹⁵⁸⁵ Matthiae (1992, 174) noted that there are other images in which the king appears before the winged figure in prayer, "as happens with all the major deities of the Old Syrian pantheon".

¹⁵⁸⁶ Matthiae 1992, 174.

¹⁵⁸⁷ For example, on p. 176, he interprets scenes in which the winged deity and the enthroned deity are unaccompanied by the Storm-God as "certainly pointing to the declaration of the god's hegemony by the father of the gods", witnessing to El's "role at the origin of the fight". However, El and Yamm seem to have a complex relationship both symbolically and narratively, so there may have been other occasions for a scene of this type.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Matthiae 1992, 176.

and broken passages in the texts, especially with regard to Yamm's role in the royal succession *vis-à-vis* the royal adoption scene. Also interesting in this regard is Ps. 139:9: "If I should take the wings of the morning, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea". The passage is poetic, and it seems to be employing NWS mythological vocabulary. In addition to the sea, the word for morning, *šḥr*, was also known as a god in ancient Ugarit. At the very least, the 'winged Šaḥar' is an allusion to a divine or mythological being,¹⁵⁸⁹ which is why one could argue that its parallel member in the verse, the sea, may also reference an ancient divinity or allude to one. Regardless of what Yamm's actual role in the enthronement scene was, the god of the sea was inarguably somehow involved with the concept. And the sea is found in connection with the enthronement of the divinity in several Biblical texts as well.

5.4 North West Semitic Conceptions in the Hebrew Bible: The Great Waters and the Enthronement of the Divinity

In this chapter I discuss further influence of the NWS Combat Myth on the Biblical texts. The first group of the psalms under examination in this chapter consists of psalm verses that seem to employ motifs and vocabulary familiar from the NWS Combat Myth, especially in connection with the enthronement of the divinity over the Flood. The image of Baal seated enthroned as a mighty warrior whose voice is thunder was, according to Pitard, the climactic focus of the Baal Cycle and a fundamental image of the god for the Ugaritians.¹⁵⁹⁰ The term *ym* *rb* has also often been considered a mythological term,¹⁵⁹¹ but it would appear that its connection to the NWS Combat Myth is questionable. While the phrase does contain a certain element of combat in the Hebrew texts, the phrase does not exist in the Ugaritic corpus.¹⁵⁹² The seminal article on the phrase by May (1955),

¹⁵⁸⁹ Widengren (1958, 150, 164), for example, saw a mythological character in the figure of Šaḥar in the verse.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Pitard 2013, 200.

¹⁵⁹¹ The phrase has sometimes been translated as 'many waters' (e.g. May 1955), but in light of the Ugaritic (and Egyptian) terminology this translation does not seem warranted anymore.

¹⁵⁹² Fabry 1997, 283, has compared the relationship between Yahweh and the Great Waters to that of Israel and Babylon, arguing that there is a political context to the use of the phrase although its mythological dimension has not been entirely erased. While more textual parallels would be required to connect the phrase itself with Babylon (unless the Biblical phrase is understood as a direct calque of A.AB.BA), I certainly agree with the notion that there is a political aspect to the Combat Myth.

however, concluded that the “Many Waters” or “Great Waters” – I prefer the latter term – in nearly all occurrences refer to enemies of Yahweh.

Loretz suggested that it is simply the Mediterranean Sea which is meant by the term ‘Great Waters’,¹⁵⁹³ and I am inclined to agree with him. While as such it may correspond with the use of the Sumerian A.AB.BA in cuneiform texts, this use does not negate all the mythological connotations of the term. The phrase has been connected to the Combat Myth, and it has been interpreted as the primal sea or a cosmic manifestation of the sea, although the reasons for doing this have not always been clear or explicated. Perhaps the phrase itself recalls certain poetic imagery. Hutton connected the term in the Isaiahic passage to the theoretical Anat Hymn, which I discussed previously.¹⁵⁹⁴ In the texts of the HB, the term seems to have a curious connection to the idea of enthronement.

Ps. 77:20 features the phrase suggested to contain mythological allusions, although it does not necessarily or always connote mythical meanings. According to Kloos, the term refers to the heavenly ocean upon which Yahweh sits enthroned.¹⁵⁹⁵

בָּיָם דָּרַכְךָ	77:20	Your way was <i>in the sea</i>
וְשִׁבְיִלְךָ בַּיָּם רַבִּים--		and your path in the <i>Great Waters</i> --

Ps. 77:20 also uses the word דָּרַךְ in connection with the sea, which I discuss subsequently.¹⁵⁹⁶ Müller interpreted verses 17–20 in the context of the Storm-God battling against the Flood, which is a subset of his battle against the sea. Yahweh is presented as the warrior Storm-God who displays his power over the Flood.¹⁵⁹⁷

The same phrase of ‘Great Waters’ is featured in Ps. 107:23, where the term appears to merely describe the sea (albeit in the context of a theophany of the Storm-God):

יֹרְדֵי הַיָּם בְּאֲנִיּוֹת	107:23	They that go down <i>to the sea</i> in ships,
עֹשִׂי מְלֶאכֶה בַּיָּם רַבִּים		They that do business in the <i>Great Waters</i> .

V. 23–30 form a psalm within a psalm, which seems to recall the narrative in Jon. 1.¹⁵⁹⁸ Note the similarity between the word מְהוֹר (‘haven’) and the port of Ugarit,

¹⁵⁹³ Loretz 1984, 93.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Hutton 2007, 280–293.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Kloos 1986, 55.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Note also that Müller (2003, 53–59) identified 77:17–18 as a description of Yahweh as the weather-god archer that drives his chariot through the raging thunder storm, arguing that the psalm contains archaic poetic material.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Müller 2008, 43–63.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Ps. 107:23–30: “Those who descend *to the sea* in ships, the doers of commerce upon *Great Waters*; they saw the words of Yahweh, and his deeds *in the deep*; and he spoke and he raised the storm wind, their spirits melted from trouble; they reeled this way and that way and

Ma'hadu (*ma-a-ha-di*), located in *Minet el Beida* on the Syrian coast. While the passage may contain an invocation of a protective sea deity (Baal's usurpation of the role of protective sea deity from an older sea-god is discussed by Stoltz),¹⁵⁹⁹ its connections to the theme of kingship are non-existent. In both cases, בָּמִים רַבִּים is parallel to and for the sea. In addition to these psalms, the phrase can be found in Pss. 18:17, 29:3, 93:4. Ps. 78:15 and Is. 51:10 use a related term, כְּתֹהֲמוֹת, "the great deep". תְּהוֹם רַבָּה/רָבָה, "the great deep".

In Ps. 93, we have a classic example of the kingship of Yahweh, sitting enthroned upon the Flood.¹⁶⁰⁰ It belongs to the יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ group of psalms.¹⁶⁰¹

נִכּוֹן כְּסֹאֲךָ מֵאֶזְ	93:2–4	Your <i>throne</i> is established of old;
מֵעוֹלָם אַתָּה		from ancient (time) you are. ¹⁶⁰²
נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה		The <i>rivers</i> have lifted up, O Yahweh,
נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם		the <i>rivers</i> have lifted up <i>their voice</i> ;
יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דָּכָם		the <i>rivers</i> do lift up their waves! ¹⁶⁰³
מִקְלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים		From the voices of the <i>Great Waters</i> ,
אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי-יָם		(are) mightier the breakers of <i>the sea</i> ;
אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה		(but) mightier than the most exalted is Yahweh!

Pss. 24, 74, and 93 are the psalms into which motifs of the Combat Myth have most readily been read in previous research, although their interpretation in the context is not unanimous.¹⁶⁰⁴ Psalm 93 also has a certain affinity to Ps. 46. The tricolon in verse 3 has been interpreted as one of the actually archaic tricola in Biblical poetry, which Müller, for example, has interpreted as suggesting an older textual layer in the psalm. Müller also submitted that it is not only an enthronement psalm, but also a "*Triumphlied*" for the Storm-God who has

staggered like a drunkard and all their wisdom was swallowed up; they cried unto Yahweh in their distress and brought them out of their troubles; he calmed the storm and the waves thereof still, and they rejoiced for it was quiet, and he lead them to the haven of their desire".

¹⁵⁹⁹ Stoltz 1999, 740.

¹⁶⁰⁰ For text criticism, see Kraus 1978, 815; Pardee 1988; Spieckermann 1989, 196–208. For a literary analysis, see Human 2007, 151ff. For a stichometric arrangement, see Cross 2003, 73.

¹⁶⁰¹ The psalm begins with the proclamation ("programmatic proclamation", according to Human 2007, 147) "יהוה מֶלֶךְ", "Yahweh is king!", recalling the declaration of Baal's kingship in KTU 1.2. IV 32. Note also that the LXX dedicates this psalm to David. Cross 2003 interpreted the psalm as an "affirmation of Yahweh's kingship", a prime example of the sort of non-committal position to the cultic character of the psalm taken by many scholars in recent years. There are examples of coronation in the psalms that do not feature the Combat Myth, such as Ps. 23. See Loretz 1979, 39; Jeremias 1987, 17. In fact, none of the psalms connected specifically to Yahweh's kingship (Pss. 8, 22, 23, 30) by Spieckermann (1989, 226ff.) contain either mentions of the sea or allusions to the Combat Myth.

¹⁶⁰² *Targum secundum* has an addition of 'lh' at the end of the line, which might be interpreted as reading "From eternity you are god".

¹⁶⁰³ The last line is missing from the Greek text of the LXX.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Trudinger (2001, 39) proposed an alternative interpretation in which the Zion traditions have replaced "the *Chaoskampf* pattern". He did, however, admit that the pattern can be read into the texts.

vanquished the Flood. Basically the psalm is a song about Yahweh's victory over the Flood, which begins with a reference to the god's enthronement.¹⁶⁰⁵ Cross regarded the psalm as a classic example of the motif of Yahweh's enthronement.¹⁶⁰⁶

While the motif of the divine combat and the subjugation of the sea could ostensibly be read into the psalm, there is no trace of earthly kingship in the passage. There could be a reference in the psalm to the Ordeal by river, discussed previously, in the fact that the verb *našū* (which usually has the meaning of lifting up) is used as a technical term for the Ordeal at Nuzi.¹⁶⁰⁷ I am not suggesting that the rivers are presented as undergoing the Ordeal as a subverted metaphor glorifying Yahweh, or that the passage even alludes to the Ordeal, but that vocabulary of the Ordeal is being recycled at a time when the technical meaning of the phrases was no longer in active use. Note also with regard to the turning back of the sea in Ps. 114 that at Nuzi, the resolution came after the accused turned back from the gods, *ilāni iddūr/ittūr*.

Although the psalm clearly displays the mythic constellation associated with the Combat Myth, the only way to connect the verses to the actual monarchic institution is to imagine the role of the enthroned divinity being partaken of by the king as a cultic actor.¹⁶⁰⁸ It has been suggested that the *Sitz im Leben* of the Enthronement psalms would have been the king's performance of the role of the divinity in the cult. In fact, Human described the psalm using the words "foundational myth of the Jerusalem cult during the monarchical period",¹⁶⁰⁹ which is keeping in with my proposition of the Combat Myth having been used as a foundational myth in the Pre-Exilic Hebrew context. The Combat Myth has certainly been read into the passage, as the waters therein are subjugated, even though no explicit battle-motif is present. The main topic of the psalm seems to be the enthronement and kingship of Yahweh, 'clothed in majesty'.

Ps. 93 is extremely short, only five verses in total, which may belie its old age. The same can be said about the tricolon employed in it, especially in v. 3.¹⁶¹⁰

¹⁶⁰⁵ Müller 2008, 64–85.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Cross 2003, 75–76.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Driver & Miles 1940, 132.

¹⁶⁰⁸ The enactment of the psalm has been viewed in the context of the Babylonian New Year's festival, described by Human (2007, 147) as the "Enthronement festival for the god Marduk", for which Yahweh's enthronement festival would be analogous. See also Clifford 2003, 109.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Human 2007, 147.

¹⁶¹⁰ Loretz 1990, 44, 49. The psalm uses both bicolon and tricolon, but a mixture of the two forms can also be seen in Ugaritic poetry.

V. 4 mentions the “Great Waters”.¹⁶¹¹ According to Fabry, the phrase is used here in the sense of a destructive cosmic force.¹⁶¹² I do not agree with his assessment, as there does not seem to be anything particularly or explicitly destructive about either the “Great Waters” or any of the parallels (rivers, the sea) of the phrase. What v. 3–5 seem to underline is the subjugation of these forces to the majesty of Yahweh. It is possible that the establishment of Yahweh’s throne, mentioned in v. 2, is meant to have occurred on top of the floods, as well as the Great Waters and the breakers of the sea mentioned in subsequent verses, but one must be careful with making such assumptions. The psalm juxtaposes the sea and the river in v. 3–4, even though they are not paralleled exactly, nor are they featured in the structure of the parallelism of members.

The tricolon of v. 3 mentions rivers (in the plural) three times, while in v. 4 the tricolon is continued by a bicolon paralleling the ‘Great Waters’ and the sea. There is a clear anthropomorphism in the ‘lifting up of the voices’ of the rivers, but rather than presenting the sea and the rivers themselves as anthropomorphic characters, it functions instead as a poetic *device*, an abstraction of the combat motif. The rivers also perform an act of lifting up of the דָּכָה. The word is a *hapax*, and it has been difficult to interpret in the context. Usually a sound of the breaking of waves has been proposed, from the roots דָּכָה (‘to break’) and even דָּכָא (‘to be broken’).¹⁶¹³ Loretz searched for the meaning in the Ugaritic *dkym*, but the meaning of the Ugaritic word remains as elusive as that of the Hebrew term. But according to Loretz, both the Ugaritic and Hebrew words are connected to Yamm.¹⁶¹⁴ Human described the mythological language and allusions in the psalm as “slumbering” within it.¹⁶¹⁵ According to Lipiński the impersonal form of the sea allowed it to represent all of the enemies of Israel, *pars pro toto*, perhaps akin to the Egyptian Nine Bows discussed in section 6.5.¹⁶¹⁶

Montgomery interpreted the entire psalm as a short commentary on the myth of the rebellion of the sea and the rivers,¹⁶¹⁷ although it must be noted that it is not the sea that *rebels* in the Ugaritic myth, but the Storm-God. The aquatic forces in the psalm can be interpreted as adversarial to Yahweh. Certainly they are

¹⁶¹¹ For discussion on the term specifically with regard to Ps. 93, see Human 2007.

¹⁶¹² Fabry 1997, 275, 283.

¹⁶¹³ See Klein 1987, 124; HALOT 1994, 221; BDB 2006, 193–194.

¹⁶¹⁴ Loretz 1979, 39, 431–432.

¹⁶¹⁵ Human 2007, 147.

¹⁶¹⁶ Lipiński 1965, 122–135.

¹⁶¹⁷ Montgomery 1935, 269–272.

subject to him, but it is Yahweh's kingship and victory that takes centre stage. In the psalm, the battle has already been fought and won. Loretz read the psalm in the context of Yahweh's victory over his adversary (which is understood to be Yamm), and in the background of the psalm he saw a description of Baal on his northern mountain sanctuary, Saphon. The psalm would only at a later stage have become an anthem for Yahweh's eternal dominion. According to Loretz, the psalm is witness to the fact that in Pre-Exilic times Yahweh was believed to have conquered his enemies from atop his royal throne. Thus, he took the linguistic features of the psalm as witnessing to its old age, even if its final redaction was Post-Exilic.¹⁶¹⁸ Lelièvre likewise interpreted the psalm as the confirmation of Yahweh's kingship, the enduring nature of which was demonstrated by the original triumph over the sea, but also by the continued existence of the temple and the Jerusalem cult.¹⁶¹⁹

The brevity of the psalm suggests that the composition of v. 3–5 is not a later insertion, but that the psalm forms a whole with internal coherency. The tricolon of v. 3 has been problematic, and it has been suggested on the basis of LXX that the last colon should be removed. The editors of BHS also suggest a correction of the last verbal form to וַיִּשָּׁאֵר in order to harmonize with the other two. But certainly the discrepancy in the forms is the *lectio difficilior*. As such, it is the וְעֵדָיִךְ of v. 5 that defines the function of all the water-phrases of the previous verses. If we are to interpret it as witness ('your witnesses'), then the function of the Great Waters and the sea is to witness to the might of Yahweh. If we interpret it as military troops ('your forces'),¹⁶²⁰ then it is the might of Yahweh that keeps the Great Waters, the roaring floods, and the sea at bay. While the former has been the preferred interpretation in many translations of the verse, the latter seems to make better sense in light of the Combat Myth, and especially its use in royal inscriptions.

In this context, the interpretation of some of the words ought to be re-examined. The translation and interpretation of the psalm have clearly been difficult, to which the wealth of alternative readings and suggestions is

¹⁶¹⁸ Loretz 1979, 485–486, 502; 1990, 51, 106–107.

¹⁶¹⁹ Lelièvre 1976, 253–275.

¹⁶²⁰ While the Hebrew for both possibilities is the same, the latter meaning has 149 occurrences in the HB, while the prior only four, one of which is this particular verse. The three other occurrences with this meaning can be found in Gen. 21:30, 31:52 and Josh. 24:27.

testament.¹⁶²¹ For example, מְקִלֹת in verse 4 is usually interpreted as referring to the ‘voices’ of the Great Waters with the preposition מִן, possibly in analogy to the קוֹלֵם of v. 3. Here it could also refer to thunder as Yahweh’s weapon. Another possibility is a plural form of מִקֵּל, a possible cognate of the Egyptian word for sceptre or weapon, *ma-qi-ra*. The word usually has a symbolic meaning in the HB.¹⁶²² The אֲדִירִים of the same verse could also be an instance in which the word ים has been conflated with the masculine plural ending, as suggested by the fact that אֲדִיר is repeated in the singular in the same verse. However the word is to be interpreted, it has been viewed as syntactically problematic.¹⁶²³

Dahood pointed out that the psalm contains only four words which are not known from the Ugaritic texts. In addition to this, the tricolon structure and the perfect-perfect-imperfect verbal chain corresponds to Ugaritic poetry.¹⁶²⁴ Smith has proposed a parallel for the psalm in KTU 1.6 V 1–4, in which Baal defeats the sons of Asherah upon his return.¹⁶²⁵ The pertinent lines are as follows:

<i>yihd . b'l . bn . aṛt</i>	Baal grasped the sons of Asherah
<i>rbm . ymḥs . b ktp</i>	The great ones he struck with a blade
<i>dk ym . ymḥs . b šmd</i>	attackers?? ¹⁶²⁶ of the Sea (?) he struck with a mace
<i>šhr mt / šḡrm . ymṣḥ . l arṣ</i>	pale ones?? of Death he dragged to the earth

Lines 5–6 may also shed light on the interpretation of the psalm, broken though they are:

<i>p(?) y['l .]b' l . l ksi . mlkh</i>	Then Baal ascended the throne of his kingship
<i>[] . l khṭ . drkth</i>	[rose up] on the seat of his dominion

It would seem that the focus of both the psalm and the Ugaritic passage is the ascending of the throne by the Storm-God, and in order to accomplish this feat, the Storm-God must defeat his enemies. Widengren discussed the psalm already

¹⁶²¹ Loretz 1979, 39, 502. The alternative readings are based on the Qumran texts, the Peshitta, the Septuagint, and the targums.

¹⁶²² Klein 1987, 379; HALOT 1995, 627; André 1997, 548–551. According to André, it is actually originally a Semitic primary noun, and it is a loanword in Egyptian.

¹⁶²³ Eaton 1968, 608; Cross 2003, 75–76.

¹⁶²⁴ Dahood 1961, 340–344. Also Freedman 1980, 248. Alonso Schökel (1988, 36–38) defended the original Hebrew nature of the psalm.

¹⁶²⁵ Smith 1997a, 160. There is also a Hittite parallel for the Ugaritic text, in which the Storm-God defeats 77 of Ashertu’s 78 sons. Wyatt 2002, 96.

¹⁶²⁶ It is also possible to read a parallelism with “great ones, meek ones, small ones” to *rbm / dkym / šḡrm*. Note that a correspondent can be found for each term in the psalm: רַבִּים / דְּקִים / שְׁגִרִים (although the last match is far from perfect, something akin to צַעֲרִים might be expected). An alternative translation might be:

Baal grasped the sons of Asherah:
the big ones he struck with a blade /
the medium ones he struck with the pale mace of Death /
the small ones he dragged to the ground.

In this case, the passage would nor have any connection to Yamm. But if the parallel is between *ym* and *mt*, the possibility of interpreting *rbm* as an epithet of *nhr* might be suggested. Of course, a further possibility is that Yamm and Mot both held the title of ‘prince’ in this text.

in the 1950s in the context of Yahweh's annual battle against the "lords" of the sea and the river prior to his ascension to the throne, and the confirmation of his dominion over the earth.¹⁶²⁷

There is also another Ugaritic text which features language reminiscent of the psalm. In the mythic text¹⁶²⁸ KTU 1.9:15, we find the line *b ym b'l ysy ym*, which can possibly be translated as "by the day Baal lifted up the sea". The text is broken, and therefore there is no consensus as to its meaning. But what is curious in relation to Ps. 93 is that it contains several of the words found also in the short psalm: *mlk*, *nhr*, *rmm*. It also features words connected to myths of combat elsewhere, such as *zbl* and *qšt*, which are not found in the psalm. Day and De Moor also read the name Hadad into the *hdd* of line 14.¹⁶²⁹ The parallelism with the previous line suggests that this interpretation is correct. It is possible that a tribute in the form of a weapon was given (or not given) to Baal: *l ytn lhm.tht b'l [] / h . u qšt pn hdd*, possibly to the effect of "Truly Lahmu gives ... under Baal('s feet), and a bow before Hadad". I am reading Lahmu as a name based on the *klhm* of the previous line. The *l* may alternatively function as a negation: "Lahmu does not give..."

There is a definite thematic similarity between the psalm and KTU 1.1 IV 13–25, discussed previously. Parallels between the psalm and the Ugaritic texts have been noted previously e.g. by Shenkel, who proposed emendations to the Biblical psalm in view of the Ugaritic texts.¹⁶³⁰ Others, such as Human, believe that no such emendations are relevant due to the text of Ps. 93 having been "well preserved and well transmitted", apart from the emendation to the אֲדִירִים in 93:4 recognized even by him.¹⁶³¹ There are clear tensions in the text, which are evident even from a cursory look at the history of the commentary of the psalm.¹⁶³² According to Trudinger, the first verse "hails the assumption of (effective)

¹⁶²⁷ Widengren 1958, 196.

¹⁶²⁸ Although it is a short text and possibly written by a scribal student, belonging to the group of texts dubbed the Dossier of Tab'ilu, on the basis of the terminology it may be connected to the Baal Cycle. Out of the 20 lines of text, half are still legible; as the tablet is broken in the middle, each line is incompletely preserved.

¹⁶²⁹ Day 2000, 68; De Moor 1990, 72.

¹⁶³⁰ Shenkel 1965.

¹⁶³¹ Human 2007, 151.

¹⁶³² In light of the Ugaritic passages, emendations or alternative translations might be proposed for the psalm, perhaps to the effect of: Lift up (יָשָׁא, juss., or impf. "he did lift up") the rivers, crush the sea (יָדָה, impv.) from/by the sounds of thunder: the Great Waters (מִקְלֹת מַיִם רַבִּים) concluding the tricolon); the haughty Sea (אֲדִיר יָם, beginning the explanatory bicolon), from/by the breakers, the haughty one from the heights, Yahweh! (אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה). On the broken construct chain in Hebrew, see Freedman 1080, 339–341.

kingship by YHWH after the battle”. He also pointed out that in the psalm, the water monsters present a continued threat to the god even after he defeats them. He makes a valid observation that in Pss. 93 and 24, the actual description of the battle is lacking, as we only get glimpses of before and after the scene of combat.¹⁶³³

The phrase מִשְׁכְּרֵי-יָם of Ps. 93, traditionally translated as “the breakers of the sea”, is difficult to interpret. The word מִשְׁכְּרֵי occurs only five times in the HB. It is clearly derived from the root שָׁכַר with the meaning of breaking or crushing, cognate with the Ugaritic *šbr* (used, e.g. when Baal is invited to crush the wings of the birds of prey in the Aqhat narrative in KTU 1.19 III 8–9). As it is, the form should be analysed as a construct state noun in the masculine connected to the word ‘sea’, and thus interpreted as the breaking waves of the sea. If the *yod* at the end of the word came about through a repetition of the beginning of the following word, then an interpretation to the effect of “the crusher of the sea” could be considered as a parallel for the name Yahweh, functioning as the god’s epithet.

In this case, the whole tricolon-bicolon would draw its main verb from the beginning as a broken extended colon:

‘Draw up –
the Mighty Sea, O Breaker of Yamm,
the Mighty One from the heights, O Yahweh!’

However, there is no need to attempt to force the psalm to agree with the Ugaritic texts or mythos. The motivation for a Hebrew psalm concerning the kingship of Yahweh, explicitly placed on the heights (בְּמִרְוֹת) above the unruly waters, can only be in the NWS Combat Myth. Seeing this mythos in the background of the psalm requires no mental acrobatics on the part of the recipient, nor does the employment of this mythos in the psalm require textual correspondence with the Ugaritic epics.

The Hebrew psalm does not borrow from Ugaritic texts, but witnesses the recording of a living local tradition in a different (or, at the very least, altered) geographic, temporal, cultural, and historical context – regardless of when the text was written down. Could the text of the psalm have been used in the context of the instalment of a ruler in Pre-Exilic Palestine? It is certainly possible. But such usage, such *Sitz im Leben* for the psalm, cannot be proven and thus remains merely speculation. And yet there is also no reason to deny that the NWS Combat Myth, the Storm-God’s battle against the sea, is by and large responsible for

¹⁶³³ Trudinger 2001, 38.

forming the intellectual, mythological, and ideological background of the psalm.

Ps. 97:1 uses the term אֲיִים רַבִּים ('many islands'), which may also recall or subvert the phrase 'Great Waters'. Ps. 97 does not mention the word 'sea', but it is a psalm of Yahweh's kingship, beginning with the same proclamation of Yahweh's kingship (יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ) as Ps. 93. Verses 97:2–6 feature a theophany of the Storm-God: in v. 2 he is surrounded by clouds and darkness, in v. 3 fire goes before him and burns up his foes, in v. 5 his lightning bolts illuminate the ground and the earth trembles. The rest of the psalm seems to be a collection of exhortations, and their connection to the first half of the psalm is questionable. According to Hossfeld & Zenger, the formation of verses 1–6 possibly recreates a theophanic hymn for Baal, or at least it makes use of older NWS traditions.¹⁶³⁴ According to Müller, vv. 1–7 contain an older theophany of the Storm-God, which was transformed into a hymn about Yahweh's enthronement.¹⁶³⁵

It is true that Ps. 97 is one of the few places in the HB where the existence of other gods (albeit inferior to Yahweh) is still explicitly allowed. This is why Yahweh's epithet in v. 9 (עֲלִיּוֹן), while not cognate to the epithet of the Ugaritic Baal (*aliyn*), may allude to the latter. It bears mentioning that the existence of such hymns for Baal is a postulation, even if recreating one from the extant materials of epic poetry and incantations would not be a difficult task. But this brings us back to the question of *Gattung*: if such a genre is unknown in the Ugaritic corpus, does later NWS tradition, such as the Biblical texts, allow us to postulate its existence in the Bronze Age?

Ps. 98 is likewise an exaltation of the kingship of Yahweh, bringing together the concepts of the kingship of Yahweh and his subjugation of the sea:

בְּחִצְצֹרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר תִּהְיֶינָה לְפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה	98:6–8	With trumpets and <i>the voice</i> of the horn shout before <i>the king</i> , Yahweh!
יִרְעַם הַיָּם וּמִלְאֹו תִּבְלֵ וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָּהּ		Let <i>the sea</i> roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein!
נְהַרֹת יִמְחַאֲדֻּבָּהּ יַחַד הַרְיִים יִרְגְּזוּ		Let <i>the rivers</i> clap their hands, let the mountains sing for joy together!

The sea and the river(s) form a parallel pair, which seems to be used in the function of praising Yahweh as the lord of creation. The passage uses much of the same vocabulary as the others, but the idea of the subjugation of the sea seems to be ideologically removed from the idea of combat. There is a slight

¹⁶³⁴ Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 469–471.

¹⁶³⁵ Müller 2008, 87–102.

anthropomorphism of the sea in the passage on the raging noise made by the sea, but this may have arisen from the physical nature of the stormy sea. The verb used in v. 7 is the same as in Ps. 96:11, which is a repeat of the verse. According to Leslie, it is the once hostile sea that here praises Yahweh.¹⁶³⁶

According to Müller, verses 4–9 feature a celebration of kingship which has a cosmic dimension. It has a close affinity to Pss. 93 and 97, and according to him seems to presuppose 24:1.¹⁶³⁷ The word רעם, used here of the sound made by the sea, has also been connected with the sound of thunder. It may be cognate to the Ugaritic *rgm*, ‘word’, which is also connected to Baal’s thunder. While it is not a parallel for the passage, KTU 1.2 I 46 shares much the same vocabulary: *an.rgmt.lym.b’lkm adnkm. tpt.nhr*, ‘I say to the Sea, your lord, to your master, Judge River.’ The clapping of the hands in v. 8 is expressed by the verb מָחָה, which is etymologically connected to the Ugaritic word *mḥš* with the meaning of ‘striking’.¹⁶³⁸ The verb is used in the Baal Cycle several times; famously, for example, in the passage where Anat boasts about the defeat of Baal’s enemies.

The hands (or palms) of the river are a clear anthropomorphism that can scarcely be explained away.¹⁶³⁹ In the Baal Cycle, it is also explicitly mentioned that Yamm had hands and other body parts (KTU 1.2 IV 14–15), in clear contradiction to the belief that his nature was serpentine:

<i>hlm.ktp.zbl.ym</i>	Strike the chest of Prince Sea,
<i>bnydm.tptnhr</i>	Between the hands of Judge River!

In Ps. 98 the rivers are paralleled by mountains, and both of these refer back to the sea. Pss. 96 and 98 are both thought to be Post-Exilic, although they carry mythological themes that are Pre-Exilic. Both psalms are also thought to contain cultic characteristics, and they have a connection to the idea of kingship.¹⁶⁴⁰

Ps. 24 also shares terminology with KTU 1.1. IV, as it seems to describe the foundation of the Davidic kingdom.¹⁶⁴¹ In Ps. 24, Yahweh establishes (יָסַדָּהּ / יִסְּדָהּ) his (and the king’s) throne upon the sea, where he sits akin to the Storm-God enthroned upon the Flood (famously featured also in Ps. 29):

¹⁶³⁶ Leslie 1949, 82.

¹⁶³⁷ Müller 2008, 174–179.

¹⁶³⁸ It is also connected to the Hebrew words מָחָה and מָחָץ, both of which have the meaning of striking.

¹⁶³⁹ It must be pointed out that the Hebrew word כַּף may also designate a branch or a stone, based on the Akkadian *kāpu*. Were it not for the parallelism of the mountains singing of joy, perhaps the words could be interpreted in a completely natural, non-anthropomorphic fashion as rivers crashing against the rock.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Loretz 1979, 55–60, 67–70; Terrien 2003, 684.

¹⁶⁴¹ For redaction and linguistic analysis of the psalm, see Spieckermann 1989, 200ff.

Note that the verb for the establishment is the same as that used in KTU 1.3 (*yknnh*), with the meaning of the installation of the king. Craigie submitted that vv. 1–2 form a hymnic element, which may not originally have belonged to the psalm, but became attached to it at a later stage from some other context entirely.¹⁶⁴²

Ps. 24 has been discussed in the context of the gate cult and the statue of Yahweh. The *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm has been seen in the cultic function of the bringing of the statue into the city in an annual procession (e.g. by Müller). According to him, the occasion for vv. 7–10 is the arrival of the Storm-God connected to the gate cult. The first verse pertains to the kingship of the god and portrays Yahweh as the owner and builder of the world over the Flood.¹⁶⁴³ The psalm has also been discussed in connection with the temple and Yahweh’s subjugation of the sea.¹⁶⁴⁴ Ps. 24 explicitly names Yahweh as the king, giving him the epithet “king of glory” (מֶלֶךְ הַכְבוֹד) in v. 10.¹⁶⁴⁵ The verse’s exclamation הוּא מֶלֶךְ, “Yahweh (of the hosts) is king!” parallels the proclamation of Baal’s kingship *b’lm.yml[k]* in KTU 1.2 IV 32 (and Marduk’s proclamation in *EE* IV 28, “Marduk alone is king!”). Although the proclamations employ different types of syntax (the Hebrew proclamation being a nominal sentence and the name of the divinity featuring an epithet, while the Ugaritic clause features either an impf. or juss. verbal form), it is significant as this proclamation is the central motif of the Baal Cycle.

Other features are also shared between the psalm and the Baal Cycle. V. 3 mentions the mountain of Yahweh upon which his holy place (מִקְדָּשׁוֹ) is situated. The context of v. 2 therefore seems to be the establishing of the throne of Yahweh upon the rivers and the seas, which parallels the throne of the Ugaritic El as the source of the rivers and the channels of the deep. Niehr connected the throne of Yahweh to the cult statue of the divinity in the Jerusalem temple in the monarchic Pre-Exilic times. According to him, prophetic visions of Yahweh seated on a throne are based on first-hand knowledge of Yahweh’s cult statue.¹⁶⁴⁶

¹⁶⁴² Craigie 1983a, 211.

¹⁶⁴³ Müller 2008, 147–167.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Cooper 1981, 376.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Smith 1990, 120, discussed the concept of Yahweh manifesting in the form of his “glory” having roots in Pre-Exilic, Iron Age Yahwism.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Niehr 1997, 82–87. Especially the anthropomorphic references to Yahweh presuppose the

The earthly king is not explicitly mentioned in the psalm, but may he be alluded to in vv. 4–5, which not only describe the person that can approach Yahweh on his mountain sanctuary, but also seems to receive a boon. The boon, called בְּרָכָה ('his blessing'), which can also have the meaning of a physical gift, may also allude to lightning (בָּרָק), especially if contrasted with Ps. 144:5–6, where Yahweh is asked to come down to cast lightning and shoot arrows, and whose enemies in v. 8 are described as the antithesis ("those whose mouth speaks falsehood and whose right hand is the hand of lying") of the receiver of the boon in Ps 24:4 ("he who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not take my/his¹⁶⁴⁷ name in vain and does not swear deceitfully").

Ps. 24 has been discussed both in the context of the cosmic sea and the ancient NWS cosmology, as well as the cleaving of the sea monster by the creator god.¹⁶⁴⁸ Ringgren suggested that the concepts of the physical sea and the cosmic, mythical sea are conflated in the psalm. To him, the sea, the river, and the deeps in the psalm were all possible references to the world-encircling cosmic ocean.¹⁶⁴⁹ Much has also been made of the number of the sea and the river in the Biblical texts over the years, with Craigie being among the scholars who asserted that the pluralization of the terms in the HB was an indication of their demythologization. While in the Ugaritic texts the personified *ym* and *nhr* are always in the singular, the use of the poetic or emphatic *m* in KTU 1.2 I 36–37 may be noted:

<i>'bdk.b'l.yymm</i>	Your servant is Baal, O Yamm
<i>'bdk.b'l.nhrm</i>	Your servant is Baal, Nahar

Some of the plural endings in the HB may ostensibly reflect similar usage. While it is clear that the subjugation of the waters is implicit in the establishment of Yahweh's dominion over the waters, these interpretations seem to overstate the evidence of the text. For Craigie, Ps. 24 was an example of the demythologization and depersonification of 'Canaanite' mythological themes by the Hebrew psalmists. The pluralization of the sea and the river would be an indication of the transformation of what Craigie dubs a "primitive cosmology". Nonetheless, he thought that the symbolic understanding of the sea and the river was significant, especially because it was connected with kingship in the Ugaritic texts. In his opinion, the creation aspect of Ps. 24 served a function similar to the battle motif

existence of a cult statue, while texts such as Pss. 24:7, 9, 47:6, 9, 68:1-3 suggest a procession involving the statue.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Lit. breath/spirit (שָׁנָה). The suffix is either sg.1 or sg.3, depending on the manuscript. Cf. BHS for details.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Craigie 1983a, 212; Ringgren 1990, 92; Stoltz 1999, 740; Cooper 1981, 376.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Ringgren 1990, 92.

in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁶⁵⁰ Furthermore, Day described the psalm as the triumphant return of the victor.¹⁶⁵¹

The curious phrase “Great Waters” is also a feature of Ps. 18 (as well as 2. Sam. 22, which features mostly the same text as Ps. 18) and Is. 43:16. While the word ‘sea’ cannot be found in Ps. 18, already in 1955 May read the psalm in the context of the Storm-God’s battle against the sea.¹⁶⁵² It does seem at the very least to feature a theophany of the Storm-God:

וַיֵּרָאוּ אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם	18:16–17/	And the <i>channels of water</i> were shown,
וַיִּגְלֻזּוּ מוֹסְדוֹת תְּהוֹמֹת	2. Sam.	and the foundations of the world were laid bare
	22:16–17	
מִגְעָרְתְּךָ יְהוָה		at your <i>rebuke</i> , O Yahweh,
מִנִּשְׁמַת רִיחַ אֲפָד		at the blast of your nostrils.
יִשְׁלַח מִמְּרוֹם יָקוֹחַנִי		He sent from <i>the heights</i> ; he took me,
יִקְשֹׁנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים		he drew me out of the <i>Great Waters</i> .

The phrase רִיחַ אֲפָד, “the blast of your nostrils”, seems to recall the image of the bull in particular. A detail worth noting in this context is in the use of the verb גָּעַר, as Baal uses the Ugaritic cognate of the word (*g’r*) to rebuke the assembled gods (in KTU 1.2 II 24). Day actually called the verb a *terminus technicus* for the myth of divine battle.¹⁶⁵³ Stoltz suggested that it is in fact the sound of thunder that underlies the term.¹⁶⁵⁴ Ps. 18:16 mentions the “channels of the waters” (אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם), which has a semantic parallel in the *apq.thmtm* (e.g. KTU 1.4 IV 22), “the streams of the deeps” of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, traditionally connected to the god El rather than to Baal.

The Ugaritic word *thmt* (‘depth’) – possibly vocalized as ‘tihamatu’ – is often claimed to be cognate to Tiamat, the foe of Marduk in the Babylonian epic.¹⁶⁵⁵ For the Ugaritians *thmt* appears to have signified the world-encircling ocean over which the earth-disc was bound, but they did not use this word to refer to the actual sea. Nowhere in the Ugaritic texts do we find *thmt* as an anthropomorphic creature, even though the depths do feature in some god-lists. Both the word אֲפִיק and its Ugaritic cognate refer to streams, channels, wadis, waterbeds, etc. The context of the phrase is mythological both in the psalm, where Yahweh’s might is described, and in the Ugaritic texts, where the phrase is used to describe the abode of El (which is located at the source of the rivers, at the centre

¹⁶⁵⁰ Craigie 1983a, 211–212.

¹⁶⁵¹ Day 1985, 37–38.

¹⁶⁵² May 1955, 17.

¹⁶⁵³ Day 1985, 102.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Stoltz 1999, 740.

¹⁶⁵⁵ Burkert 1992, 92. Or alternatively the Akkadian word for sea, *ti’amtum*, from which Tiamat is believed to be a derived

of the streams of the deeps, *mbk.nhrm qrb.apq.thmtm*). The parallelism between the deeps and the rivers can be found in both the Ugaritic texts and Biblical poetry (e.g. Ps. 78:15–16). One should also note v. 11, which makes mention of Yahweh riding upon the clouds (here rendered with כְּרִיב, often rendered ‘cherub’) and the wind. The clustering of vocabulary related to the Storm-God is evidenced in the psalm.

While the psalm’s *Gattung* is that of an ‘individual thanksgiving’ psalm, the individual in question has traditionally been interpreted as representing the king on behalf of the community. Therefore, it is sometimes also listed as a royal or kingship psalm.¹⁶⁵⁶ Ps. 18 has also been placed in the context of the cultic suffering of the king, which has been connected especially to the royal ideology of Judah and Jerusalem.¹⁶⁵⁷ Weiser believed that the verses of the psalm may have changed through frequent cultic use to the extent that the restoration of their ‘original’ form is impossible – although the search for ‘original’ forms of ancient poetry seems to be an exercise in futility to begin with.¹⁶⁵⁸ Weiser suggested that the different structural elements of the psalm were woven into a more or less coherent whole at some point in the transmission of the text. According to him, it was this constructed whole which would have been used as part of the cult.¹⁶⁵⁹ While cultic communities probably favoured certain texts above others and recognized familiar texts, there is no need to assume that the rigidly unchanging nature of a text was required for a text to have cultic use.

Ps. 18 is paralleled by 2 Sam. 22, which Craigie deemed the older of the two, although there are enough differences between the texts to entertain the notion that they may have been recorded from oral tradition on two separate occasions, sharing a source instead of a genetic connection. No literary connection is assumed to exist between the texts. Furthermore, Ps. 18 is considered a very old composition, as it exemplifies certain archaic features and verbal forms no longer found in newer texts of the HB. While Craigie found much affinity between the language of Ps. 18 and the Ugaritic texts, he did not assume a literary dependence between them. He opined that Ps. 18 was a clear adaptation of the Baal-Yamm myth, in which the Belial of the psalm shared a role similar to that of Yamm in the

¹⁶⁵⁶ Craigie 1983a, 171; Rodd 2001, 361.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Loretz 2002, 386–387; Seybold 1997, 362.

¹⁶⁵⁸ The search for the ‘original’ form of Psalms was *à la mode* in the 1960s, see Becker 1967. While it is not unreasonable to assume that texts have and do and must change in the process of transmission, searching for the ‘original’ form of a text – any text – seems a fruitless task.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Weiser 1962, 186–187.

Ugaritic myth. He found partial parallels for verses 5–6 in KTU 1.2 III and 1.5 I, for verses 7–15 in 1.4 III, and for verses 16–20 in 1.2 IV and 1.6 VI.¹⁶⁶⁰

The most significant of the psalms mentioning the phrase מִיָּמִים רַבִּים is Ps. 29. Kloos devoted over half of her book to a thorough examination of Ps. 29 in the context of the Combat Myth. I have no intention of recreating her study here, so for the minutiae of the psalm, her work may be consulted.¹⁶⁶¹ An Enthronement psalm, Ps. 29 is considered a classic example of the locus. The psalm is considered hymnal, meaning that its *Sitz im Leben* was found in cultic use, although its actual place in the cultic life of the community is impossible to recreate.¹⁶⁶² Ps. 29 is also considered one of the oldest psalms in the HB,¹⁶⁶³ and themes which are familiar from the oldest texts in the HB, such as the Song of the Sea and the Song of Deborah, have been observed in connection with the psalm.¹⁶⁶⁴

For Craigie, Ps. 29 was an example of ancient Hebrew war poetry. He admitted the possibility, however, that the victory hymn of Ps. 29 may have been modelled after the theme of Baal's enthronement, and that similar themes are familiar from the war poetry of the broader ANE, in which the storm-gods were often also gods of war.¹⁶⁶⁵ It has been suggested that El may have been the protagonist of the psalm, but Kloos demonstrated that there is no reason to suppose that Ps. 29 is about El in spite of the divinity being named as the one enthroned upon the Flood.¹⁶⁶⁶

Important in this context is the Mesopotamian conception of the Flood discussed by Anthonioz.¹⁶⁶⁷ Her most important discovery was that the Flood, while recalling for the modern reader an immediate association with water, was considered more an entity of the winds of the storm-god Enlil than an entity of the waters. The sea was not an important element to the ancient Sumerian, so when a flood of water is mentioned, it is likely referring to an overflowing river rather

¹⁶⁶⁰ Craigie 1983, 172–175.

¹⁶⁶¹ Kloos 1986. Pp. 15–126 pertain to Ps. 29.

¹⁶⁶² Anderson 1972, 232; Craigie 1983a, 243.

¹⁶⁶³ Day 1985, 3; Segert 1999, 166–168. Anderson (1972, 233) pointed out that the psalm is often dated to the Post-Exilic period based on the vocabulary it shares with prophetic literature (see e.g. Loretz 1984, 57–70, on the basis that Ps. 29 is a mixture of different styles). This argument falls short of the mark, as prophetic literature famously makes use of older NWS poetic vocabulary, making this a 'chicken or the egg?' type of question.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Craigie 1983a, 246. Attempts have been made to date the Song of Deborah to the Persian era, but opposing views have been presented (e.g. by Rendsburg 2003, 122–127).

¹⁶⁶⁵ Craigie 1983a, 245–248.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Kloos 1986, 37.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Anthonioz 2009, 295–343.

than the sea. The Flood is a weapon, or a manifestation of the king as the weapon of his god, but this motif needs to be seen as different from the conquest of the sea. In fact, in Anthonioz's description of Sumerian kingship as predominantly being a pastorate, the conquering of the sea is not mentioned among the king's many characteristics.¹⁶⁶⁸ The idea of the divinity of the Combat Myth being seated on a Flood-throne may come from a text called *The Address of Marduk to the Demons*,¹⁶⁶⁹ in which Marduk is called "the lord who sits in the Akītu in the midst of the sea" (EN šá ina á-ki-it ina qa-bal tam-tim áš-bu). It is not a feature of *EE* itself, and the concept may in fact have Sumerian origins. In the Gudea cylinders, Ea is enthroned on the Abzu, where the serpents and monsters (*la-ha-ma*) dwell. It is worth noting that in Sumerian *balags* Ninurta is also found holding back the flood, which means that the idea of the *constraining of the waters* may also have a Sumerian origin.¹⁶⁷⁰ It is not the constraining of the sea that we find in the Post-Sargonic Amorite traditions, but its conquest.

Müller interpreted Ps. 29 in the context of the Storm-God manifesting in his temple, as a hymn for the king of the gods and the cultic procession for the enthroned divinity. According to him, it is an older song about the effects of Yahweh's thunderous voice which was embedded into a hymn on his eternal kingdom. Müller also argued from a redaction-critical stand-point that vv. 1–10 form an older layer to the psalm.¹⁶⁷¹ The vocabulary and imagery,¹⁶⁷² as well as the asymmetric poetic metre,¹⁶⁷³ shared between the psalm and the Ugaritic texts were noticed early on,¹⁶⁷⁴ and Ps. 29 is perhaps the psalm which has most often been compared with Ugaritic poetry – and in which points of connection have most often been found. Often the psalm has been interpreted as polemic against the older 'Canaanite' conceptions. Spieckermann, for example, interpreted the idea cluster of cedars, Sirion, and Lebanon as together signalling polemic against

¹⁶⁶⁸ Anthonioz 2014, 54.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Lambert 1954–1956. See p. 312 for the individual tablets from which Lambert collated the text (Lambert 1959–1960, 114 contains corrections to the list).

¹⁶⁷⁰ Edzard 1997, 84. Cylinder A xxiv, xxv; Annus 2002, 126.

¹⁶⁷¹ Müller 2008, 103–146.

¹⁶⁷² See Segert 1999, 172, for a thorough comparison of the vocabulary of the psalm and the Ugaritic texts.

¹⁶⁷³ Anderson 1972, 233; Loretz 1984, 114; Segert 1999, 168. The phrase קוֹל יְהוָה is repeated seven times in the psalm, which Day (2000, 96–97) connected with the phrase šb'ī brqm ('seven lightnings') of KTU 1.101 3b–4. The word קוֹל may in many Biblical passages be interpreted as referring to thunder. Compare this with the Ugaritic 'holy voice' (*qlh qdš*) of Baal in KTU 1.4 VII 29, interpreted also as meaning thunder. Anderson 1972, 235; Craigie 1983a, 247; Propp 1987, 11; Day 2000, 96.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Ginsberg 1935.

the god Baal.¹⁶⁷⁵

The Ugaritic text with which it shares the most affinity is KTU 1.4 VII 25–52.¹⁶⁷⁶ According to Loretz, the psalm is a product of Post-Exilic Yahwism, but contains remnants of “Canaanite” traditions.¹⁶⁷⁷ In the psalm, Yahweh is seated atop the ‘Great Waters’, which has been interpreted as representing his victory over the forces of chaos.¹⁶⁷⁸ While symbolism drawing from the myth of divine battle is certainly at play in the image of the Storm-God’s enthronement above the floods, the introduction of chaos into the scene is unnecessary. As already mentioned, the idea of enthronement above the waters may also hark back to the El-traditions of Ugarit (KTU 1.3 V 6–7), in which he was seated amidst the rivers, at the centre of the channels of the deeps. But in excess to El, the Storm-God is also found enthroned in iconography and on representational items from the Eastern Mediterranean. One of the most interesting examples in this context is the bronze statue from Hazor, which Ornan identified as representing the enthroned Baal (who she called the “Levantine storm god”), based on the texts of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.¹⁶⁷⁹ If her identification of the statue is correct, it offers us physical evidence of the use of this mythology in the daily life of the people in the Southern Levant in the LBA (14th century BCE).¹⁶⁸⁰

The head-dress of the statue is also curious, containing a tree-like motif flanked on both sides by horned animals.¹⁶⁸¹ With regard to the tree symbolizing

¹⁶⁷⁵ Spieckermann 1989, 175.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Kloos 1986, 37.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Loretz 1984, 152.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Anderson 1972, 236, 238.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Ornan 2011, 253. It is interesting to note that the room of the monumental building where the statue was recovered also contained a bull figurine and an Egyptian-type axe. The 35 cm high solid bronze Hazor statue is the largest seated statue known from pre-classical Levant (p. 255), making it a very important piece of evidence of Pre-Exilic religion and, in my opinion, the uses of political mythology in northern Israel. There was another seated bronze figurine (7 cm) found at Hazor, which was discovered in a jar with an axe and other weapons (discussed by Ornan on p. 274), which emphasizes the martial character of this divinity. She suggests that especially when a usually standing divinity represented the patron deity of a city, the god could be depicted as a seated figure. The patron deities of cities most likely also functioned as monarchic divinities, so this is a sensible conclusion.

¹⁶⁸⁰ She dates the statue on the basis of the garment worn by the figure, as it matches the clothes worn by Asiatic (“Canaanite”) figures in Egyptian reliefs from the period. Ornan 2011, 262.

¹⁶⁸¹ Ornan 2011, 264–272. Note that while the statue of the god itself is not horned, the crown of the god contains a depiction of two horned animals (on p. 269 Ornan writes that the statue lacks horns, but what the statue actually lacks is *protruding* horns). Ornan interprets the tree and animals motif as representing fertility, fecundity, and abundance of nature. While they were probably a part of the meaning intended by the use of these symbols, the horned animals on the temples of the head of the god flanking the tree-sceptre both also refer to the martial power of the Storm-God. The idea that the tree flanked by horned animals was connected to kingship in the Eastern Mediterranean may be indicated by the fact that it is featured on Egyptian iconography on depictions of Asiatic peoples, see e.g. the Canaanite prisoner (fig. 17

the divine weapon of the Storm-God (and thus the Storm-God himself), the tree motif of the statue has at its centre a vegetal staff motif (fig. 2b in Ornan 2011), with the head of the staff possibly symbolizing the lotus flower.¹⁶⁸² The lotus sceptre is in the very middle of the head-dress, the tree growing around it, as though the sceptre forms the trunk of the tree. If this identification is correct, it offers us a link between the lotus-shaped vegetal staffs of the Phoenician kings of the LBA and Early Iron Age, the tree as a symbol of the Storm-God's divine power, and the Combat Myth.¹⁶⁸³

While seated figurines are often interpreted as El-figures, Ornan makes a good case for why this statue in particular, and some of the other seated statues in general, ought to be interpreted as Baal-figures.¹⁶⁸⁴ She mentions the scholarly assumption of equating the Storm-God with the standing smiting figures and El with the seated figures, based on a conjecture from the Ugaritic texts in which El is described as the head of the divine assembly, and how this scholarly consensus on the positions of the divinities has made alternative interpretations difficult.¹⁶⁸⁵ She pointed out that the seated posture was regarded as more eminent and dignified.¹⁶⁸⁶ Note especially her comment on the statement by Cornelius, where he claimed that Baal figures in a sitting position are not known from the period.¹⁶⁸⁷ The argumentation of Cornelius seems circular: seated Baal figures are not known because figures of seated divinities are not interpreted as Baal figures.

Of course, the seated figures rarely contain aspects that would allow their firm identification as El-figures, either. Keel & Uehlinger point out that it is “too facile a solution” to interpret all seated divinities as El and all the striding gods as

in Ornan 2011, who calls it an “ethnic marker for Canaanites”), indicating that it functioned as the standard under which the Asiatic armies marched.

¹⁶⁸² Ornan (2011, 264) calls it a flower made of nine petals, although later she also refers to it as a flower of three petals representing a schematized lotus. Ornan interprets it as symbolizing abundance and fertility, but in light of the Phoenician vegetal sceptres, the connection of the motif to monarchic authority specifically should be considered. If the vegetal sceptres have a connection to the lightning-tree motif of Syrian iconography, they may have functioned as a symbol of the Storm-God's power, which would be fitting on the head-dress of the Storm-God.

¹⁶⁸³ Ornan (2011, 265) mentions the motif on the sarcophagus of the Byblian King Ahiram, where the dead king is depicted with a wilted lotus. In Phoenician iconography the upright lotus symbolized the living king and the wilted lotus the dead king. The sceptre is surely a phallic symbol, and it could thus have connotations of fertility, but in the context of kingship the vegetal staff seems to have an iconic relationship to the divine power of the Storm-God.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Ornan 2011, 277–279. She also makes the point that the seated god represents the exalted stance of the god as king, representing the deity in his most elevated form, with the two different postures of the divinity hinting at a divine hierarchy in the narratives.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Ornan 2011, 272–280.

¹⁶⁸⁶ See Ornan (2011, 274) for bibliography and discussion on the history of the iconographic interpretations of the two divinities.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Cornelius 1994, 229.

Baal, as Baal's combat also culminates in his enthronement.¹⁶⁸⁸ This is an important point: Baal becomes the king of the gods by replacing the old king. It makes sense that as the enthroned monarchic divinity, Baal would also be depicted as a seated god. The enthroned figure of Ps. 29 may be interpreted as a Baal-type Storm-God regardless of the name used. The throne of Baal (or the Storm-God) rather than El has also been seen in Is. 66:1, which has been compared with KTU 1.101, where Baal appears to be likewise seated on a mountain throne.¹⁶⁸⁹ While the passage from Is. 66 contains the parallelism of throne (כִּסֵּא) and footstool (הֶדְרָם) which is a feature of the Ugaritic texts (*ksy*, *hdm*, e.g. in KTU 1.4 I 33–35), likely drawing from the wellspring the NWS poetic vocabulary, use of the word-pair does not necessitate a genetic relationship, especially since the words are so closely associated with the theme of kingship. In the Ugaritic texts the footstool is associated both with Baal and with El and are denied to the Pretender Athtar in KTU 1.6. I 59–61, both symbols of the reigning monarch.

One of the aspects of the psalm which has remained undiscussed so far is the possibility of Ps. 29 containing a reference to the divine weapon (in v. 9). The translation of the verse has caused trouble for most scholars due to its incomprehensibility, as evidenced by the different attempts to make sense of the line in connection with the rest of the psalm.¹⁶⁹⁰ Day entertained and rejected the possibility of sometimes translating the Hebrew אֶמֶר with Ayyamarri (*aymr*), the name of the weapon of Baal. He was following Cassuto, who saw a possible reference to the weapon in the אֶמֶר ('word') of Hab. 3:9. The fact that the word is paralleled by קִשְׁתְּךָ ('your bow') in the Hab. verse may give credence to Cassuto's suggestion. Furthermore, the parallelism of sea and river is featured in v. 8, and the river is mentioned again on v. 9, following a theophany of the Storm-God in vv. 3–7.

Day's rejection of the interpretation was based on it creating a *hapax legomenon* of this meaning of the word, but I think that other arguments may outweigh this objection. Nor is the word necessarily a *hapax*; every occurrence of the root should be investigated against this suggestion.¹⁶⁹¹ Translating words of the root אֶמֶר with a reference to the weapon may be plausible at least in v. 29:9. The words וּבְהִיכָלָו לָלוּ אֶמֶר כְּבוֹד have been translated, for example, as "and in his

¹⁶⁸⁸ Keel & Uehlinger 1998, 58.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Smith & Pitard 2009, 65–66.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Kloos 1986, 61–62, contains a review of the proposed alternatives.

¹⁶⁹¹ Cassuto 1975, 11.

palace all cry: glory”,¹⁶⁹² “the ‘Honour(-cloud)’ of Yhwh is enthroned”,¹⁶⁹³ or “in his temple (his) Glory appears”.¹⁶⁹⁴ According to Kloos, all of the proposed translations require a translation of אָמַר which “lacks solid foundation”.¹⁶⁹⁵ Based on the context of the psalm, traditionally seen as a hymn celebrating Yahweh as the victor over the waters, a mention of his weapon would not be out of place. Therefore, based on Cassuto’s suggestion for Hab. 3:9, a translation of a nominal clause “And in his palace (is) his weapon: the glorious Ayyamarri!” may be suggested for Ps. 29:9. As far as the author is aware, no passages beyond Hab. 3:9 have been discussed in the context of the Storm-God’s weapon with regard to the root אָמַר. This might occasion future research.

The sea or the name Yamm is not mentioned in Ps. 29, but clearly it is the Storm-God’s battle with the sea that is the topic of the psalm. It is fairly certain that the water-related terms in the psalm are mythological in nature.¹⁶⁹⁶ But is this basis enough for assuming that a character akin to the Yamm of Ugarit was indeed familiar to the inhabitants of the inland kingdoms of Palestine? I am not certain it is necessary to assume that Yamm was known in the area of Palestine during the early Iron Age in order for the adopting of certain mythological motifs used in connection with the royal cult to have taken place. It is possible that for mythological themes or vocabulary were assumed without a full understanding of all the specifics.

More likely, however, is that the psalm is a reflection of local Palestinian traditions of the Combat Myth, displaying not the assumption of NWS traditions, but exemplifying local traditions of the same.¹⁶⁹⁷ A ‘Canaanite’ or a ‘Phoenician’ origin has been proposed for Psalm 29,¹⁶⁹⁸ but there is nothing to suggest that the psalm had to have been adopted in its entirety or in its current form. In spite of this, it has been proposed that very few alterations took place in the adoption of the psalm. The fewest proposed alterations of a Phoenician hymn into the psalm amount to the changing of Baal’s name into that of Yahweh, for which the

¹⁶⁹² Kloos 1986, 61. See pp. 61–62 for discussion. Most of the English translations of the verse seem to follow along the same lines.

¹⁶⁹³ Margulis 1970, 332–348.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Cross 1973, 155.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Kloos 1986, 61.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Loretz 1984, 93; Day 1985, 58–61.

¹⁶⁹⁷ In particular, Müller (2014, 271) has described Yahweh as a “local Palestinian weather-god” with whom motifs of the NWS weather-gods are found, particularly in the psalms.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Cross 1950, 19–21; Anderson 1972, 233; Loretz 1984, 126; Segert 1999, 167.

alliteration in the psalm has been seen as evidence.¹⁶⁹⁹ It must be pointed out that while there are thematic similarities between the psalm and the Ugaritic texts, and even some shared terminology,¹⁷⁰⁰ there is no text in the Ugaritic corpus that corresponds to Ps. 29 as a whole.¹⁷⁰¹

It is generally (although not universally; see Watson 2005) accepted that Ps. 29 contains themes familiar from the mythology of Baal, or at the very least similarities with the Ugaritic Baal texts, although there are some who categorically refuse to see influences of the myth in the psalm. Tsumura, for example, denies the influence of the myth on the Biblical poetic texts, claiming that the language of storms and floods is used merely metaphorically, having nothing to do with “primordial combat”, as some of the texts seem to deal with themes of destruction rather than creation.¹⁷⁰² His mistake is in thinking that the motif of combat is necessarily primordial and that it is necessarily linked to creation, which it is not. Furthermore, the sense in which the Hebrew authors have used the language of NWS poetic metaphor is not evidence enough to deny linguistic and textual influence on Hebrew poetry. Surely the Bronze Age poet was likewise using “language of storms and floods metaphorically”, a tendency that is clearly displayed in the many royal inscriptions discussed in this thesis.

Yet it is unclear what manner of dependencies on the level of tradition history or what kinds of literary or cultic connections we can assume between the psalm and the Ugaritic Baal texts on the basis of linguistic similarities.¹⁷⁰³ The psalm has either been seen as a Baal-hymn adopted by the Yahweh cult, in which the raw materials of NWS mythology have remained more or less intact,¹⁷⁰⁴ or alternatively the psalm has been interpreted as a poem mocking the worshipers of Baal using the vocabulary and motifs familiar to Baal’s worshipers in a

¹⁶⁹⁹ Craigie 1983a, 244; Kloos 1986, 213; Segert 1999, 167.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Such as *mlk* ‘*lm* / מְלִכֵּי אֱלֹהִים and *bn ilm* / בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים. On the ‘sons of El’, see Loretz 1979, 438; 1984, 75–78; 1990, 60; Anderson 1972, 234; Curtis 1985, 112; Kloos 1986, 16; Smith 2001a, 37. Anderson suggests that the term in the HB is a demythologized version of the divine assemblies familiar from ANE literature. There is little in the text to suggest that a demythologization of the phrase is necessary in this context.

¹⁷⁰¹ Loretz 1984, 109; Kloos 1986, 99. For the parallels between Ps. 29 and the Ugaritic texts, see Loretz 1984, 111–126.

¹⁷⁰² Tsumura 2005 (see pp. 196–197 for conclusions).

¹⁷⁰³ Kloos 1986, 11.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Kloos 1986, 11–21. On pp. 94–124, Kloos criticizes the view that Yahweh existed simply as an Israelite Baal. She suggests that Yahweh independently possessed similar attributes to Baal. Schwemer (2001, 523–542) discussed the importance of Baal in the area of the Levant during the Bronze Age. It is possible that Yahweh both existed independently as a divinity with a domain similar to Baal’s, and that Yahweh assumed some of the functions of the NWS Baal at the time that both divinities were prominent in the area.

polemizing fashion.¹⁷⁰⁵ It seems likely that the structure and imagery of the psalm did correspond to a hymn originally composed for a Baal-type divinity,¹⁷⁰⁶ although the hard evidence for this suggestion is lacking.

The use of the term “Great Waters” in the Isaiahic passage 43:16 also deserves a closer look:

בְּה אָמַר יְהוָה	Thus says Yahweh,
הַיֹּתֵנוּ בַיָּם הַגָּדֹל	the giver of a way through the sea
וּבְמִיִּם עֲצֻם נְתִיבָהּ	and a path through the mighty waters.

In the passage, Yahweh’s authority is predicated on his dominion over the sea. The noteworthy aspect is that the verse is embedded in a prophetic oracle, preceded by the words “Thus says Yahweh”. Finding references to the Combat Myth in these short prophetic oracles is unsurprising, since some of the first references to the myth are similarly found in quotations of prophetic oracles in the OB texts from Mari.¹⁷⁰⁷ The use of the word דָּרַךְ in the context is interesting, and is also featured in Ps. 77:20, as already mentioned. The form featured in the psalm is ‘your road’ (דָּרַכְךָ), also used in connection with the sea. The word is used in a nominal sentence to convey the idea of traversing the sea, “through the sea, your road”, “in the sea, your road”, etc., depending on one’s interpretation of the ב-preposition in this instance. What makes the verse curious with regard to the Baal Cycle is the Ugaritic word *drkt*, which is used, for example, in KTU 1.2 IV 10, 13 (mentioned in connection with the fashioning of Baal’s weapons),¹⁷⁰⁸ and outside the Baal Cycle (e.g. in RS 24.252/KTU 1.108:6–7).¹⁷⁰⁹

The meaning of the Ugaritic word is ‘dominion’ or ‘power’, and it has been proposed as a cognate of the Hebrew word דָּרַךְ.¹⁷¹⁰ Kloos suggested that the word might in this instance refer to Yahweh’s power over the sea.¹⁷¹¹ While I do

¹⁷⁰⁵ Craigie 1983a, 243–249.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Anderson 1972, 233; Day 2000, 97.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Pardee & Glass 1984, 94: “A repeated announcement to Zimri-Lim that he would be victorious over Babylon is reminiscent of Biblical oracles of the same type [...] As for the role played by these prophets, it seems to be quite comparable to that of the Israelite prophets under unresponsive kings”.

¹⁷⁰⁸ “You will take the kingdom of your eternity, the dominion; that which (belongs to) your issue” (*tqh.mlk. 'lmk drkt.dt.drdrk*).

¹⁷⁰⁹ “And may she drink, Anat the mighty; the lady of kingship, the lady of dominion, the lady of the heights of heaven” (*w tšt. 'nt.gtr<t>.b 'lt.mlk.b 'lt.drkt.b 'lt.smm.rmm*).

¹⁷¹⁰ Smith 1994b, f128; Loretz 1979, 493–494. See Dahood 1954, 627–631 and Barstad 1984, 194 for discussion and bibliography. Dahood mentions that at least in the cases of Ps. 21:14; 59:17; 110:7; 138:5, Num. 24:17, Hos. 10:13, Jer.3:13 and Prov. 31:3, a reading of ‘dominion’ (or some related term) has been suggested for the Hebrew word. Barstad also discussed Am. 8:14 in the context. Albright (1934, 130) saw the Ugaritic *drkt* as a causative form of the *drk*-stem, with the meaning of dominion arising from the idea of treading.

¹⁷¹¹ Kloos 1986, 200.

not suggest that the Hebrew word should be read in the sense of “through the sea, your power” or even “by Yamm, your might”, it could well be that word-play is intended by the choice of words, recalling *both* the Exodus event and the Storm-God’s battle with the sea.¹⁷¹² In fact, use of the parallelism of the native word for ‘sea’, possibly recalling the NWS divinity Yamm, and the phrase recalling the Mesopotamian A.AB.BA, ‘Great Waters’, may indicate that this combination of the traditions was intentional.

To Dahood, this verse was an example of a demythologized reference to the god Yamm.¹⁷¹³ Verses 77:17–20 form a tricolon,¹⁷¹⁴ which may suggest that the verse is either of an older layer of poetry, or that it is using archaizing language. Tricola are much more common in Ugaritic literature.¹⁷¹⁵ To Loretz the vv. 17–20 were also an example of the symbolic language of Baal being transferred almost without alteration to Yahweh.¹⁷¹⁶ It is worth noting that v. 18 also seems to contain a theophany of the Storm-God.¹⁷¹⁷ There are some thematic parallels between the passage and the Ugaritic texts, but the textual parallelism is lacking.

¹⁷¹² Cross (1973, 112–114) suggested that in the psalm, a creation myth combined fully “with the Exodus-Conquest events”, not divorcing the battle motif from the theme of creation.

¹⁷¹³ Dahood 1961, 270–271.

¹⁷¹⁴ Lelièvre (1976, 253–275) also believed that they are thematically separate from the rest of the psalm and are not connected to the motif of the crossing of the Reed Sea. I disagree that they should be separate from the tradition, as it is much more likely that they found their way to their current position through motif attraction. V. 17–20 read:

The waters saw you, *Elohim*;
 the waters saw your strength,
 the depths also trembled;
 The clouds overflow with waters,
 the skies gave forth thunder,
 your arrows also went forth;
 The sound of your thunder was in the whirlwind,
 the lightnings lighted up the ground,
 the earth trembled and shook;
 Your *derek* was on the sea
 and your path on the Great Waters,
 and your footsteps were not known.

Verse 21 brings the above passage back into the context of the Exodus-narrative with the mention of the characters of Moses and Aaron. While the name of the divinity in the psalm is *Elohim*, Kloos 1986, 119, has argued that the names used of the gods in the texts of the HB which may allude to the Combat Myth are not consistent. Therefore, the fact that the name *Elohim* is used instead of *Yahweh* in this psalm should not be taken as evidence of its not being a part of the same traditions as the psalms that do employ the name *Yahweh*.

¹⁷¹⁵ Loretz (1990, 49–50) pointed out that sometimes Biblical verses are interpreted as tricola out of a simple desire to date the texts to an earlier period. Authentic tricola do, however, exist (e.g. Ps. 93:3). See Loretz & Kottsieper (1987, 49–52) on the problem of colon division in Biblical poetry.

¹⁷¹⁶ Loretz 1990, 49–51. Also Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 87–90.

¹⁷¹⁷ Discussed by Curtis 1985 and Avishur 1994, 7. Contra Loretz 2002, 416–417.

While Ps. 65:8 has a further vague possible reference to the myth (“He who stills the roaring of the seas, the raging of their waves”), it is a Davidic psalm in which the subjugation of the sea may feature as one of the feats performed by the god on behalf of the king. The same word for ‘raging’, רָאַץ, is also used in Is. 13:4 as the loud noise made by the multitudes of men. The root רָאַץ has the meanings of destruction and annihilation, with a nod toward KTU 1.83, where the concept of the drying up of the sea is often found.¹⁷¹⁸ The word is usually found in military contexts (e.g. in Am. 2:2; Hos. 20:14 and Jer. 48:45), and it is used as a mocking epithet of the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco in 2. Kgs. 19:28; 32:29. Müller viewed verse 65:7 as a fragment of a hymn about the Storm-God and the bountiful land, containing a portion in which the Storm-God secures the mountains and calms the Flood. The celebratory hymn in vv. 10–14 is a thanksgiving song for the rain and bounty of the earth.¹⁷¹⁹

The association of military hordes and the sea is one of the ways in which the myth of divine battle has been refitted into the confines of a historical narrative.¹⁷²⁰ Ps. 65 employs much of the same ancient Semitic poetic vocabulary as we find in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁷²¹ The psalm also features a theophany of the weather-god, presenting Yahweh in this role of the bringer of rain showers. Weiser suggested that the psalm was originally written for a cultic context, for the averting of drought and famine.¹⁷²² I would not go so far as to reduce the psalm to a kind of magic spell against drought, but guaranteeing sufficient rain fall for crops was in a sense one of the king’s responsibilities, and it was likely hoped that the weather-god would assist his earthly representative in this task. The king’s other responsibilities, as outlined in the psalm, included holding back the mountains, stilling the tumult of people, and finally, defeating the sea. The idea of the Storm-God’s enthronement on the waters is well attested in the HB. Where it is less well attested is in the older Amorite tradition.

¹⁷¹⁸ See HALOT 1999, 1367–1368; BDB 2006, 980–981.

¹⁷¹⁹ Müller 2008, 143–145.

¹⁷²⁰ See Weiser 1962, 465; Day 2000, 98.

¹⁷²¹ E.g. Loewenstamm (1965, 96–101) suggested that the psalm ought to be compared with the Ugaritic texts.

¹⁷²² Weiser 1962, 461.

5.5 Summary and Discussion

The Ugaritic texts represent the most important textual witness to the NWS Combat Myth. This is why it is extremely important to have a clear idea of what the texts actually tell us about the Combat Myth and the mythic constellations therein. The Ugaritic texts do not offer us much in the way of an *ancient* interpretation of the myth, nor do they offer insight into how the myth was used and understood in the context in which it was written. Inferences regarding the nature, meaning, and use of the mythic tradition have been made in research, but there is little consensus on the many questions pertaining to the myth. The danger is that each scholar makes his or her own reading of the myth to fit an existing agenda and, in the worst case, attempts to make older textual witnesses accord with interpretations of much later texts.

The question that I have posed to the Ugaritic Combat Myth in this dissertation is what it can reveal to us about the legitimation of Ugaritic kingship, and possibly also of the broader NWS monarchic institution of the LBA. The Amorite Combat Myth seems to have been used to legitimize monarchic rule in the OB period, so it follows that if and when the myth was adopted into the politics of the Eastern Mediterranean, it was probably used in a similar fashion – unless pressing evidence for interpreting a change in the function of the myth presents itself. The royal adoption scene of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle is likely based on the system of symbolic social adoption or monarchic sponsorship practised in the Amorite kingdoms, clearly using the vocabulary found in the epistolary Mari texts. This system followed from the nature of monarchy: the old king must either be deposed or die for a new king to take his place. The sponsorship of newly acceded kings by established monarchs assured the stability of the overarching system.

In the Baal Cycle, this system is found in a mythologized narrative. As Baal legitimized kingship in society, so did the character of Yamm mediate it. Yamm was as necessary for dynastic succession as its patron, the dynastic Storm-God. The most important concepts regarding the monarchic use of the Combat Myth that we can find in the Baal Cycle are Baal's defeat of the sea using his weapons, the possible royal adoption scene in the broken column of the first tablet, the use of Amorite political terminology (both the familial terms used by kings to refer to each other, and the epithets which marked one as either having

the patronage of the Storm-God of Aleppo or lacking it), the possible enthronement of Baal, and the list of rivers, which incidentally seems to preserve local traditions of the Combat Myth and which was added to the text of the Baal Cycle to indicate Baal's total domination of his enemy. Due to its rare lexical items and recognizable format, the list is one of the most distinguishable textual traditions found in the much later texts of the HB. Even if the context in which it was employed in these later texts is different, the function is similar: the subjugation of the monstrous creatures of the list is used to exalt the dynastic god.

In addition to the Ugaritic texts, the iconography of the LBA may also help elucidate both the Ugaritic texts and possibly even some of the later Hebrew texts. The most important (and thus far unrecognized) characteristic of the god Yamm revealed by iconographic evidence is the connection of the god with the monarchic animal, the horse – a connection which persisted between the animal and the god of the sea on the Levantine littoral well into the Hellenistic period. The other important evidence displays the god of the sea as a winged and armed deity, which is found in Syrian glyptic not only in scenes of battle with the Storm-God, but also in the role of the mediator of kingship. The ancient Semitic king ruled with the authority of the Storm-God, with his power and his prestige, presenting himself as the representative of the divinity to his people. But it was through the conquest of the sea that the king was made.

Many of the conceptions discussed in the previous chapters can also be found in the HB, although due to the temporal distance between the texts, it is doubtful that the HB texts exhibit living traditions. What is interesting with regard to the texts of the HB is that Walton suggested the “theocratic sponsorship of the Israelite (Davidic) king” as the topic of Pss. 1 and 2, being the opening theme of a composition celebrating the kingship of David (and the entire Psalter), seemingly with no knowledge of the Amorite traditions.¹⁷²³ But even if the HB texts did employ archaic traditions in new contexts, it is extremely important to keep in mind that while the HB texts display a great number of similarities to the Ugaritic texts of the LBA, no direct literary dependence exists between the textual traditions.

It is vital to recognize that the authors and composers of the HB were likely employing local traditions which, while they may have shared elements and

¹⁷²³ Walton 1991, 24.

modes of thinking with their northern counterparts, also necessarily contained characteristics unique to the Southern Levantine area. The list of the monsters defeated by the goddess Anat in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle may be one of texts in which we can witness both the shared elements and unique characteristics of these ancient cultures, as the proper names in the lists seem to have been altered from place to place, while the list format itself remained the same. But the shared NWS cultural milieu was not the only channel of transmission of the Combat Myth into the texts of the HB. Next I will discuss the evidence from the broader ANE.

6. He Shall Have Dominion from Sea to Sea: Kingship and the Sea in the Broader Ancient Near East

6.1 Introduction and General Remarks

While the Mariote and Ugaritic texts are the best witnesses to the NWS Combat Myth – and as such the most relevant to the object of my study – there are both other witnesses to the NWS myth and other myths of divine combat which ought to be discussed in relation to the Ugaritic and Mariote texts. It is through comparison and contrast with these other ancient witnesses that we may arrive at an approximation of what the indigenous characteristics of the NWS myth were, which will then facilitate a comparison with HB texts. Understanding the function of the myth is impossible without a clear picture of the different mythic traditions. The NWS Combat Myth did not develop in a vacuum, and a review of the other mythic traditions can be used to create a context for the traditions of the myth in Mari and Ugarit. What follows in the subsequent sections is an overview of myths of combat in the Syrian-Anatolian area (section 6.2), the NWS cultural sphere outside of the Ugaritic and Mariote texts (section 6.3), the Mesopotamian area (section 6.4), and Egypt (section 6.5). The relevant Biblical passages are discussed in connection with the aforementioned traditions.

6.2 And He Went to the Sea for Battle: The Sea in Syrian and Anatolian Myths

6.2.1 The Combat Myth in Eblaite Texts

The Syrian city of Ebla flourished in the 25th century BCE, only slightly before the time of the Akkadian Sargonids. The Ebla archives were discovered in 1975 by P. Matthiae's team at modern Tell-Mardikh. The Ebla tablets, which mostly contain economic and administrative texts, word lists, king lists, treaties, and documents, have been dated to 2500–2250 BCE (the *terminus ante quem* is secured by the destruction of Ebla in 2250; note that both Ebla and Mari are mentioned as cities conquered by Sargon in E2.1.1.11), making them the oldest of the texts under my examination. The texts have been published in the series *Archivi Reali di Ebla. Testi* (ARET), and an introduction to the publications in English has been provided by G. Pettinato (1981). The texts most pertinent to the topic under discussion are from ARET 5.¹⁷²⁴

The city of Ebla was situated between Aleppo and Ugarit, half way between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates. Stieglitz called the city a “periphery” due to its location in Northern Syria “situated between Canaan and Mesopotamia”, but from the point of view of the Amorite Aleppo, Ebla can hardly be described as peripheral. Stieglitz himself even admitted that the region was “long the meeting ground of diverse peoples: Canaanites, Amorites, Hurrians, Akkadians, and Sumerians”; this seems like the opposite of a periphery.¹⁷²⁵ In fact, during its First Kingdom, Ebla appears to have been the most prominent kingdom in the Syrian area. Fronzaroli pointed out that Aleppo functioned as the major cultic site for the deity worshipped at Ebla during the Early Dynastic period – meaning that the main deity of the Eblaites was the Upper Euphratean Storm-God.¹⁷²⁶ Aleppo and Ebla shared a sphere of influence.

No Combat Myth as such is known from ancient Ebla, although Fronzaroli interpreted a few text fragments as containing references to Adad's battle against an enemy which is not the sea. These are texts where the Storm-God is portrayed as fighting serpents, and Fronzaroli interpreted them as the oldest examples of the Storm-God's battle against the sea – the sea which is nowhere mentioned in the

¹⁷²⁴ See Biggs 1980 for details on the physical contents of the archives.

¹⁷²⁵ Stieglitz 1990, 79.

¹⁷²⁶ Fronzaroli 1997, 286–288.

texts that he discusses.¹⁷²⁷ In fact, there are few mythological texts in the tablets beyond fragments which may have belonged to a creation story. Note, however, that the Eblaite creation story was not an *Amorite* creation story, but had been written before the Amorite conquest of the city during the time of the ‘Third Kingdom’.¹⁷²⁸ Sasson pointed out that the Eblaite texts betray “heavy dependence on Sumerian literary taste”.¹⁷²⁹ In the texts of Ebla, then, we have fragmentary evidence of myths of *conflict* prior to the formation of the NWS version of the Combat Myth. The fact that the character of the sea is not found in connection with the Combat Myth in the texts of Ebla at this time is to be expected in light of my hypothesis that it was only after Sargon’s campaign to the Mediterranean Sea and the conflation of the Akkadian political ideology with the mythology of the Upper Euphratean Storm-God that the sea became introduced into the mythology.

The sea is not explicitly mentioned as the Storm-God’s enemy in the texts, so the Ebla tablets may have more bearing on local mythic traditions connected to a river prior to Sargon’s conquest of the sea, and on the topic of the serpent charms. Schwemer interpreted the Eblaite texts specifically as incantations in which Adad’s enemy is bound by seven weapons, the nature of which is unclear.¹⁷³⁰ Schwemer also took the Ebla texts as evidence of a local, self-contained (“*eigenständige*”) Syrian tradition of the myth, seeing the existence of the texts at Ebla as evidence of a contemporary tradition probably also found in Aleppo.¹⁷³¹ While I agree that the Ebla texts do display a tradition of a myth of combat which contains characteristics unique to the Syrian area, the myth that we find at Ebla is decidedly different from the myth witnessed by texts after the introduction of Sargon’s character into the tradition.

The sea is mentioned in the Ebla bilingual lexical lists MEE 4:336, #1343’, in which AB-*a* is equated with *pú-la-tum* and *ti-’á-ma-tum*. Gordon suggested that

¹⁷²⁷ Fronzaroli 1997. The texts are ARET 5:2, 5:4, and 5:16 V 5–VI 4. While Adad is not mentioned by name in ARET 5:1, it contains similar vocabulary and may belong to the same group.

¹⁷²⁸ There are four fragments of a Sumerian or Sumerian-language example of royal praise written on three tablets (ARET 5:24, 25, 26) published by Pettinato 1980, 61–67 (with facsimiles in Edzard 1984, pl. 40–41), which may describe the creation of the world. The content and translation of the tablets has remained a controversial issue ever since Pettinato himself connected them to the creation account of Gen. 1.

¹⁷²⁹ Sasson 2005, 218: “Whether this condition reflects folk, elite, expatriate, or merely scribal interest is not easy to tell”.

¹⁷³⁰ Schwemer 2001, 116–119, 188.

¹⁷³¹ Schwemer 2001, 118–119. Frayne (2013, 68) went a step further, claiming that the Ebla texts are “almost certainly an early example of the motif of the struggle against the monsters found in the later Marduk theology of *Enūma eliš*”. If there are echoes of the Eblaite myths in the Babylonian tradition, they are extremely distant echoes.

the former corresponds to the Hebrew פֶּרַח, which he claimed to be a common noun with the meaning of “cosmic sea”.¹⁷³² The topic of the Storm-God’s weapons in the Ebla texts has also already been covered in an earlier chapter.¹⁷³³ Suffice it to say that a tradition of the Storm-God’s battle against a monstrous foe (or foes) seems to have been known at Ebla. But on the other hand, the concept of the sea seems to have played a smaller role in the Ebla texts, if indeed the sea was understood as a divinity at all. This is to be expected of such an inland location. It is not the sea that the Storm-God battles at Ebla.

Stieglitz, remarking on the pantheon of Ebla, attempted to derive an “Old Semitic” core of deities from Eblaite pantheon lists. Among this Old Semitic core, he listed a god called Ḫayyum (É-um), which he associated with the Sumerian god Ea, usually connected with subterranean sweet waters. According to him, the name is one of two notable exceptions in this Old Semitic core of deities, which appear with the very same names in the Canaanite pantheons of the Bronze and Iron Ages.¹⁷³⁴ Although Stieglitz did not discuss the possibility, É-um may ostensibly have represented an admittedly unusual attempt to render the NWS *yam* phonetically, perhaps resulting from a local Eblaite dialect. Stieglitz, however, suggested that the god Kothar/Kušarru is behind the name, citing as evidence the Ugaritic RS 20.123 rev. IV 19, which equates ^dA.A, Eyān (*e-ia-an*) and *ku-šar-ru*. It should be pointed out that the Ugaritic trilingual (containing Akkadian, Hurrian, and cuneiform Ugaritic) does not necessarily equate the divinity with the Ugaritic Kothar. Note, however, Kothar’s Ugaritic byname *hyn* with the meaning of ‘deft’ and his epithet *bn ym*, ‘son of the sea’, suggesting a connection between this cluster of divinities that escapes the modern reader. ^dA.A, while containing the sign for water, usually designates the Sumerian goddess Aya.

I am uncertain of the method Stieglitz employed in reaching his “Old Semitic core” of deities, but it is there that some of the elements of Ebla religion seem to find correspondence with later NWS traditions. A city called Halam (*ḫa-LAM^{ki}*), which housed a temple for the storm-god Adad, seems to have been of importance to the ancient Eblaites. Bonechi connected the name to Aleppo, Halab, which is likely a correct assessment. According to him, while the city of Aleppo

¹⁷³² Gordon 1990, 129.

¹⁷³³ Bunnens & al. (2006, 65), following Fronzaroli (1997, 284–285), point out that during the time of the Ebla archives (c. 23rd century BCE) – and one assumes at Ebla – the divine weapons consisted of “one or more spears”.

¹⁷³⁴ Stieglitz 1990, 83, 87.

was not a part of the Eblaite kingdom any more than Ebla was a part of the Mariote kingdom, Aleppo was the cult centre of one of the most important Eblaite divinities.¹⁷³⁵ Ebla is to be considered an early example of the cultural influence of Aleppo, and its texts witness to the Combat Myth at a time when it was still missing many of the elements of the later Amorite myth.

In terms of the epithet ‘Beloved’ (discussed in section 5.1.3), Stieglitz suggested that *Da-mu* (whose name he derived from the Semitic word for blood, *dam*) was a popular Old Semitic deity known at Ebla. The name is indeed found as a theophoric element in the names of several Ebla kings (e.g. Ishar-Damu, Irkab-Damu, Ib-Damu).¹⁷³⁶ While he posited that Damu may have existed as a by-form of the Sumerian DUMU (e.g. in EA 83 from Amarna, which references a Byblian god ^d*da-mu*, who has been associated with DUMU.ZI), he did not think that the Eblaite deity was connected to the Sumero-Akkadian god. I propose that no separate god by the name of Damu existed, nor is the name a by-form of the name of DUMU.ZI, but that it functioned rather as a byname or an epithet of the ‘beloved’ dying and rising spouse of Inanna-Ishtar.

This is further supported by Albright, who equated the Byblian Damu with Adonis, the Phoenician lover of the Venus-goddess, a name which may have referred to Baal.¹⁷³⁷ The Eblaite Damu is also found in a similar function to Baal in the PN *ir-gáb-da-mu* (EKL 2) when compared with Ugaritic *yrgb-b‘l* (RS 24.246). A reference to the dying and rising god can also be seen in the PN *kum-da-mu*, “Arise, Damu!” in EKL 5. Furthermore, one should note that Damu was a dynastic name for the rulers of Ebla when Ebla was under Mariote control. The onomastic element -Lim also positions the Ebla kings in the Amorite sphere.¹⁷³⁸ This indicates that Ebla was among the sponsored kingdoms of Aleppo, so the epithet referring to ‘love’ is not out of place.

Stieglitz’s objection – that the association of Damu and Dumuzi is improbable due to Dumuzi being equated with *šu-um* in an Ebla bilingual – is a valid, but ultimately unconvincing argument, when one considers the fact that there were two Dumuzis (a male and a female divinity) in the Sumerian pantheon against Stieglitz’s argument that it was Sumerian deities *with no suitable Semitic*

¹⁷³⁵ Bonechi 1990, 33.

¹⁷³⁶ Stieglitz 1990, 81. See EKL for king names.

¹⁷³⁷ Albright 1969, 147.

¹⁷³⁸ For the dynastic list, see Frayne 2008, 42–43.

counterparts that were selectively borrowed into the Ebla pantheon.¹⁷³⁹ Nor can we be certain that the meaning of *šū-um* is “name”, as he suggested. The most important witness of the Ebla texts is their value in ascertaining that it was not until the time of Sargon that the concept of the sea entered into the Amorite Combat Myth – at least according to the textual witnesses at our disposal. While the texts of the Ebla archives predate the Mariote and Ugaritic witnesses, what can we learn from the recipients of the Amorite traditions?

6.2.2 The Combat Myth in Hittite-Hurrian Texts

I have decided to examine ancient Hittite and Hurrian witnesses together, because most Hurrian texts are only known to us through later rewritings preserved by the Hittites. Regardless, the overlapping mythological strata of the Hittites and the Hurrians are often extremely difficult to unravel. Hawkins was of the opinion that the Hurrians and the Hittites adopted the Aleppan Storm-God after the Hittite conquest of Aleppo, and that his cult remained popular in Hattusa all throughout the Hittite Empire period, making the witnesses important *vis-à-vis* the development of the traditions.¹⁷⁴⁰ The city of Ugarit was also a part of the Hittite Empire up until the time of its destruction, making the Hittite traditions of the myth of divine combat relevant to the present investigation. Hurrian language, literature, and religion were very familiar to the ancient Ugaritians, as evidenced by the textual finds in the city.

The Hittite-Hurrian texts most often connected to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle are the Illuyanka (Song of Hedammu, CTH 348) and Ullikummi (Song of Ullikummi, CTH 345) narratives. The Hittite mythological texts have recently been examined in the context of kingship (especially with regard to the ‘Kingship in Heaven’ motif) by Van Dongen (2010), whose PhD thesis may be consulted for a more thorough examination of the conceptions and mythological traditions of the Eastern Mediterranean. The central focus of kingship for the Song of Kumarbi was already posited by West.¹⁷⁴¹ A recent study by M. Atterer, *Typologische Analyse hethitischer Mythen: Schlange und Wettergott* (2011) is likewise relevant.

¹⁷³⁹ Stieglitz 1990, 80.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Hawkins 2011, 35–36.

¹⁷⁴¹ West 1997, 283: “the focus is on who is king”. Campbell (2013, 36) argued that this is too simplistic to be the cultic function of the mythic cycle. I agree with West, and rather than describing the focus as simplistic, I would use the descriptor *profound*.

Several studies have also been written on the connections between the Hittite myths and Hesiod's *Theogony*, containing a Combat Myth tradition of the Aegean cultural sphere.¹⁷⁴²

Despite having been a part of the Hittite Empire during its 'golden age' (the Empire Period), no literary texts in the Hittite language have been discovered in Ugarit,¹⁷⁴³ which suggests that there was some resistance to Hittite influence in the intellectual climate of LBA Ugarit.¹⁷⁴⁴ There are several texts in the Hittite sources which feature myths of divine combat, containing a succession of gods battling for the kingship in heaven. The foremost among them may be the Song of Hedammu, which is a part of the "Kumarbi Cycle" of myths (CTH 344) of probable Hurrian origin.¹⁷⁴⁵ The text witnesses that the sea was conceived of as a human-like or anthropomorphic character in certain Hittite texts.¹⁷⁴⁶ In the Hittite myth "Telipinu and the Daughter of the Sea God", the daughter of the Sea is whisked away from her father.¹⁷⁴⁷ But unlike Kumarbi (^{DEUS}*Ku-mar-bi-ya-as*), the anthropomorphized sea (*a-ru-na-as*) does not receive the divine determinative in the text.¹⁷⁴⁸ A further interesting detail of the Hittite text is that the sea is seated on a throne (KUB 12.65 iii 16).¹⁷⁴⁹ The motif of cleaving may also be present in the text, although unlike in the Babylonian myth, in the Hittite myth it is the Universe that, in Sayce's translation, is broken in two.¹⁷⁵⁰

¹⁷⁴² The parallels are discussed by West 1997, 279–280. See Campbell (2013, 28) for bibliography.

¹⁷⁴³ Astour 1981, 23. Astour argued that the Ugaritic intellectuals were simply not interested in Hittite culture.

¹⁷⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that it was in the 14th century BCE that Hurrian religion exerted the strongest influence on the Hittite ruling class. Campbell 2013, 40. Hittites and Ugaritians were both recipients of Amorite traditions, although it is impossible to discern which traditions the Ugaritians would have received directly from Aleppo or other Amorite kingdoms, and which they adopted through Hittite influence.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Since the time of Sayce, the tablet KUB 12.65 (KUB 12.49 in Sayce 1933) has been joined with KBo 26.71 and four more duplicates have been found. These are edited by Jana Siegelová, *Appu-Märchen und Hedammu-Mythus* (Studien zu den Bogazöy-Texten 14; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 35–88; translation in Hoffner 1992, 50–55. The Song of Kumarbi is contained in the tablets KUB 33.120, 33.119, 36.31, 48.97 and KBo 52.10.

¹⁷⁴⁶ While the Song of Ullikummi has likewise been placed within the cycle of myths, its colophon distinguishes it as a standalone composition. Campbell 2013, 29.

¹⁷⁴⁷ See Hoffner 1992, 26–27.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Although according to Sayce (1933, 59), it does feature the determinative for example in KUB 20.1 (^{DEUS}*a-aru-na-as*). See also B. H. L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 1/33; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 48 with syllabic writing *Aruna-* and p. 605 with Sumerograms, A.AB.BA. The serpent Hedammu, being the offspring of the god Kumarbi and the daughter of the Sea-God, likewise does not receive the divine determinative.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Note that Yamm also seems to be seated on a throne in the Ugaritic texts (cf. KTU 1.2 IV 7), with the phrase *ksi zbl ym*. Albright (1936, 19) interpreted the Sea as seated on a throne (*'sbt*) in the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus (or Astarte sitting on a throne in the sea in Albright 1932, 194). While there is no linguistic connection between *ksi* and *'sbt*, the concepts may share similarity – although probably not enough to show literary dependence.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Hoffner's translation in Hoffner (1992, 53), on the other hand, makes no mention of this,

The Song of Ullikummi (CTH 345) relates the story of Ullikummi's battle against the unnamed storm-god, who defeats the monstrous being with the help of Ea. In the story, Kumarbi uses the sea-serpent Hedammu and the stone-giant Ullikummi to challenge the weather-god Teshub's position as the king of the gods. Teshub also fights the monster Illuyanka, during which the weather-god loses his eyes and his heart to Illuyanka, initially having been defeated by the monster. He conquers the monster with the help of a feast prepared by the goddess Inara. Teshub also marries his son off to the daughter of the sea-god, his plan being to ask his son to make a request for his eyes and heart to be given back to him as a wedding gift. The weather-god's son allies himself with Illuyanka, so Teshub slays them both. The Ullikummi narrative makes mention of Mount Saphon, which was called Ḫazzi or Ḫazi by the Hittites.¹⁷⁵¹ The Hittite myths would likely have been known in the city of Ugarit, which was under their control from the time of Niqmaddu II, and may have lent some influence to the Ugaritic iterations of the myths. There are some striking similarities between the two bodies of myths, but also some obvious differences.

The other Hittite legend which has been connected to the Combat Myth (CTH 321) relates the battle of the unnamed storm-god against the serpent or dragon Illuyanka/Elliyanku.¹⁷⁵² It is one of the better-known Hittite texts.¹⁷⁵³ Gurney, following Gaster,¹⁷⁵⁴ connected the myth of Illuyanka to the *purulli*-festival celebrating the new year, during which the myth would have functioned as a cultic legend (or an aetiology of the festival), in which the serpent initially defeated the Storm-God but was then in turn defeated.¹⁷⁵⁵ Gilan described the performance of the myth during the festival as the “most well-accepted notion” connected to the Illuyanka stories, embedded as they are in a text describing the festival. Gilan himself considered the connection between the myth and the festival outdated, and pointed out that even the interpretation of *purulli* as an Old Hittite New Year's festival was never widely supported.¹⁷⁵⁶

There are two different versions of the myth (ANET 125/126), both

opting for “He traversed (the distance) in one (stage)”.

¹⁷⁵¹ Day 2000, 107–108.

¹⁷⁵² On the etymology of the name, see Gilan 2013, 100. The name is either of Indo-Aryan or Hattian origin and might refer either to a serpent or to a dragon. The creature also receives the determinative for snake, MUŠ.

¹⁷⁵³ Gilan 2013, 100.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Gaster 1952, 99–102.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Gurney 1958, 107. Also Wakeman 1973, 45–47.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Gilan 2013, 101, 104–105.

preserved on the same tablet, although it is usually only the first one that has been mentioned in connection with the Combat Myth. The text itself is known from eight or nine Empire-period copies.¹⁷⁵⁷ In the first iteration, Illuyanka defeats the Storm-God, taking away his eyes and heart. The Storm-God regains his organs when his son marries the daughter of Illuyanka, thus being able to ask for his father's organs as dowry. With all of his parts regained, the Storm-God is then able to defeat the monster. The second story features two goddesses who aid the Storm-God in defeating Illuyanka, feeding the monster and its progeny so much that they are unable to return to their abode. Niehr saw the myth of Illuyanka underlying the narratives of the Storm-God's battle with the serpent, with which he seems to indicate the Combat Myth.¹⁷⁵⁸

It should also be noted that the Hittite king was considered the son of the Storm-God and the Sun-Goddess of Arinna, and while Gilan downplayed the connection of the myth to the Hittite institution of kingship, it is one of the rare mythic texts in which the actual human king appears – and in the context of cult foundation. Gilan interpreted the myth as an aetiology for the foundation of the royal cult.¹⁷⁵⁹ According to Campbell, the succession of kingship in Hittite myths was accomplished through violence. A new king claimed the throne through conflict and combat.¹⁷⁶⁰ But the myth of combat in the Hittite-Hurrian texts takes place between the Storm-God and the serpent, not the sea – while the sea does feature as a character in the myths.

The two traditions may well have genetic links, as they existed broadly in the same geographic area in the same time frame. A case for literary borrowing would, however, require identification of likely channels of transmission. Toward this end, it should be born in mind that the traditions of the Combat Myth were most likely adopted by the Hittites from the Amorites during the conquest of the mixed Amorite-Hurrian kingdom of Yamhad, and the influence of the Hittite narratives on the Amorite myths was likely negligible (not necessarily including the Ugaritic myths specifically, which may have received Hittite influence separately during the vassalage). But while the Hittite traditions owe influence to

¹⁷⁵⁷ Gilan 2013, 106. The text contains archaisms which suggests that it may have been based on older compositions which are not preserved.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Niehr 2004, 272.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Gilan 2013, 109–111. According to him, the purpose of the priest that authored the text was not to legitimize the institution of Old Hittite kingship but to “stake and to substantiate religious claims” and to invest “his local cult with importance”. What the priest intended and what the text ultimately conveyed are, however, two different things.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Campbell 2013, 36.

Aleppan conceptions, there are some elements in the mythic traditions which seem particular to the Indo-Aryan cultures. These indigenous elements include the battle between the generations of the gods at the dawn of time and the corresponding battle at the end of time (*Götterdämmerung*, *Ragnarök*, *Frašagird*, *Kali Yuga*, ἐκπύρωσις) heralding new creation: a succession of eras and the changing of aeons. The difference between the Indo-Aryan and the NWS myths of combat is that the latter contain no temporal aspect. Rather than repeating in a cycle, it is paradigmatic, taking place at any time and at all times.

It has been suggested that the battle between the Storm-God and the serpent was a later development of the Storm-God's battle against the sea.¹⁷⁶¹ Which of the traditions is older is not a simple question, especially given that there was a Hurrian presence at Aleppo during its Amorite rule. And as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the tradition of the Storm-God battling serpents is textually older than the Storm-God's battle with the sea. What I have suggested in this dissertation, however, is that the opposite was also true: local traditions of myths of divine combat existed, some of which were tied to rivers in which the serpentine nature of the foe was a natural element, and it was only through Sargon's conquest of the sea with the aid and patronage of the Aleppan Storm-God that the concept of the sea entered the myth. The evidence of the Alalakh texts, which I will discuss shortly, also suggests that the Hurrian Teshub was incorporated into the character of the Aleppan Adad as the Hurrian presence in the city grew more prominent, rather than the other way around.

While Hurrian influence on the cult of Aleppo seems to have increased by the time of Abbael and the Alalakh archives, there is nothing in the Mari archives to indicate that this was yet the case during Zimri-Lim's reign.¹⁷⁶² Of the extant textual witnesses, the Storm-God's battle with the sea in the OB period predates the texts of Hurrian-Hittite origin, most of which were written during the Hittite Empire period. While it is often the influence of the Hittite myths on the Ugaritic epics that is discussed, Amorite influence on the Hittite myths must also be considered. The oldest witnesses to the myth are Amorite, and currently there is no reason to assume that the origin of the myth was anything other than Amorite – with Sargon's character irrevocably transforming the myth. Albright, for example, saw clear influence of the Amorites on the Hittites, especially with regard to

¹⁷⁶¹ Wakeman 1973, 25–26, 29–30.

¹⁷⁶² Edwards 1973, 40–41.

religion, illustrated particularly by “the spread of the cult of Hadad and Dagan”.¹⁷⁶³

Sayce connected the Hittite text KUB 12:49 with the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus,¹⁷⁶⁴ often associated with the Ugaritic mythos (discussed in section 6.5).¹⁷⁶⁵ The Hittite text relates a story in which Kumarbi and the “great sea”¹⁷⁶⁶ dine together. According to Sayce, this dinner is a prelude to the war between the Sun-gods of heaven (and their rallies) against the gods of the earth.¹⁷⁶⁷ The text, of which there seems to have been more than one version, shows that the sea was conceived of as an anthropomorphic character in Hittite texts. It also seems that the sea is presented as a god in a treaty list of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I from the 14th century BCE. Hittite rituals also included bringing sacrifices to the “great sea”, the Mediterranean, perhaps displaying inherited Amorite traditions.

With regard to the Astarte-Papyrus, it is interesting to note that the Song of Hedammu also breaks off at a point where the goddess Sauska and Hedammu the serpent converse, the goddess having gone to seduce the monster with her nudity.¹⁷⁶⁸ A further interesting detail of the Hittite text is that the sea is here also seated on a throne (KUB 12.65 iii 16), as in the Astarte-Papyrus the Ennead of the gods are also seated on thrones. The motif of cleaving is also present in the text, although unlike in the Babylonian myth, in the Hittite myth it is the sea that cleaves the Universe in half, in order to allow his seat to rise up from the heart of the earth. According to Pope, Kumarbi was known and worshipped in Ugarit where, based on onomastic evidence, a considerable portion of the population was Hurrian. There also exists a text where Kumarbi is associated with Baal.¹⁷⁶⁹

While it is most often the monstrous creatures Illuyanka and Ullikummi that are compared with the Ugaritic Yamm, it must be noted that the sea also does

¹⁷⁶³ Albright 1928, 254. He also suggested that the Hittites adopted the cult of the Amorite Daddas, likening the god to Teshub. On the relationship of the divinities especially with regard to the Ugaritic texts, see Wyatt 1980.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Sayce 1933, 56–57. He dated the text to the time of the Gutean dynasty (2550–2426 BCE), making it considerably older than even the Mari texts. The dating of the extant texts is, however, more recent.

¹⁷⁶⁵ But reservations for the connection were also expressed at a very early stage. Albright (1936, 18) called his attempts at finding a Hittite parallel “not very convincing”.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Hit. *sal-li-is a-ru-na-as*, which may have influenced the *tāmtum rabītum* of a wealth of Assyrian inscriptions, although Malamat (1965, 371) determined its origins as “Canaanite-Hebrew”. We also find the term ים גדול, “great sea”, in texts of the HB (e.g. In Num. 34:6–7, Josh. 1:4, 9:1, Ez. 47:15). The context of the mentions is not mythological but geographical, referring to the Mediterranean Sea. The origins of the traditions of calling the Mediterranean Sea the “Great sea” in different languages probably comes from peoples inhabiting its shores.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Sayce 1933, 58.

¹⁷⁶⁸ §12.1–15.2 in Hoffner 1992.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Pope 1955, 32; Ginsberg & Maisler 1934, 255–256.

feature as a personified being in some Hittite-Hurrian texts, notably in the Song of Ullikummi (in Col. ii of the first tablet), in which the Sea (Aruna) sends his vizier Impaluri off to Kumarbi to relay him a message. It seems that Kumarbi had attacked the Sea's abode, and the Sea, demanding to know why, invites Kumarbi to his house. The Sea orders a feast prepared for Kumarbi. What then follows is Kumarbi's message through his vizier Mukišanu to the waters (*wetena*), which may be an alternative name for the Sea.

There is also another episode in Tab. II Col. II, where Ashtart sings by the seashore and casts a pebble into the water, after which a great wave rises up from the sea to speak with the goddess. The wave gives her advice not to sing but to go look for her brother, the Storm-God. Unlike in the Ugaritic myth, in which Yamm is connected to the sea by his name only, here we can see the actual physical sea having anthropomorphic qualities. In the earliest Amorite witnesses to the myth, the sea is just a body of water, so it may be possible that the anthropomorphization of the sea in the Ugaritic tradition bears Hittite influence. But it must be stressed that the Storm-God does not actually battle the sea in the Hittite-Hurrian tradition.

Another aspect which may show Hittite influence on the Ugaritic conceptions is in the femininity of the Sun-Goddess. Shapshu is a goddess in the Ugaritic texts, while in the Mesopotamian and Southern Levantine areas the Sun was considered a male entity (although it must be noted that in Ugarit the sun was not seen solely as a feminine goddess figure, even if the gender of the word remained feminine). The kings of Ugarit and the great kings of the surrounding empires were referred to as 'the Sun' (e.g. KTU 2.16), showing aspects of the conflation between the king and the solar deity. In Hittite political correspondence, the king is also called the Sun. It would seem that both the sun-god and the weather-god could be used to legitimize the power of a king in Ugarit – and this is quite possibly showing Hittite influence, with whom both the female Sun-Goddess of Arinna (actually mentioned in the Ugaritic text KTU 3.1:19) and the local weather-gods were the protectors of the king.¹⁷⁷⁰ If these Hittite ideas influenced the religion in Ugarit, and it seems reasonable enough to assume that some influence from the Hittites must have made its way into Ugaritian thought, it would explain why, unlike in all other NWS traditions, the sun was considered a

¹⁷⁷⁰ It is a particular feature of Hittite religion that several gods with the same function could be worshipped at the same time. There were also two major sun-gods in the Hittite pantheon, a female who reigned on earth and a male who reigned in the underworld.

female deity in Ugarit.

As far as the topic is concerned, the influence that the Hittite texts may or may not have wrought on the Ugaritic myths is not the only relevant feature of texts from the Anatolian area. As recipients of the Aleppan mythology, the afterlife of the traditions in later texts from the area may also add something to the discussion, especially as the Luwian texts are from a time period which precedes the HB texts. The Storm-God is mentioned in several Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions BCE from the so-called Neo-Hittite states, written after the disintegration of the Hittite Empire in c. 1200.¹⁷⁷¹ Of these hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, it is KARKAMIŠ A4b from the 11th or 10th century and MARAŠ 1 from c. 9th century BCE which seem most relevant to the present inquiry.

KARKAMIŠ A4b,¹⁷⁷² found on a stone stele in the temple of the Storm-God in the city of Carchemish, contains the following text:

MAGNUS.REX ¹MAGNUS.TONITRUS MAGNUS.REX HEROS ka+r-ka-mi-sa^{REGIO}
REX x-pa-VIR-ti-sa MAGNUS.REX HEROS ^{INFANS}ni-mu.za wa-tu-tá-a CORNU+r-
ti^{REGIO} | LIS *ARHA* SPHINX wa-tá-a | EXERCITUS ? | FRONS-ti | PONERE
¹MAGNUS.TONITRUS REX FORTIS ^{DEUS}TONITRUS ^{DEUS}ku+AVIS | FORTIS PENIS
DARE WA | ^{FORTIS}mu-[wa]-ta-[la-ti] [PENIS-ti] | LIS-na *ARHA* DELERE-wa-ta | wa-tá-a
za STELE AVIS₃-nu-466 | PONERE su-hi-sa [...] | IUDEX-ni ^{INFANS}ni-mu-za |
^{DEUS}ku+AVIS SACREDOS-sa

The Great King, Ura-Tarhunzas,¹⁷⁷³ the hero, king to the land of Carchemish, son of [???],¹⁷⁷⁴ the Great King (and) hero. Toward him, from the Sura-land came forth an adversary, and an army he placed against (it). The mighty Storm-God and Kubaba gave the King Ura-Tarhunzas a mighty sceptre and with the powerful sceptre he removed the adversary. And therefore this stele was placed by Arnu-[???], son of the ruler of Suhis, priest of Kubaba.

Payne reads the sign *273 as warpin/warpa and interprets it as ‘courage’, with the Storm-God and the goddess giving courage to the king in his battle.¹⁷⁷⁵ However, the sign I have translated as ‘sceptre’ resembles a spear-like weapon; in this context, interpreting it as a reference to the weapon of the Storm-God of Aleppo seems warranted. There is nothing in the text itself that suggests it is not a

¹⁷⁷¹ Payne 2014, 2–3.

¹⁷⁷² Text edition in Hawkins 2000, 91–92.

¹⁷⁷³ Here the second MAGNUS.REX is taken to either describe the Storm-God, which is the theophoric element of the personal name of the king or merely to frame the logograms of the Storm-God for aesthetic reasons. It is possible also that the signs for Great King both frame the Storm-God and that the king of Carchemish did not have the title ‘Great King’ (which was the title of the king of Aleppo). The name of the king for whom the stele is dedicated is ‘The Great Storm God’.

¹⁷⁷⁴ The visible signs are ‘-pa VIR-ti-sa’, so it is within the realm of possibility for the string to be read as ‘the man from Aleppo’ (hal-pa VIR-ti-sa). The text features the titles MAGNUS.REX, REX, and IUDEX, and if the missing sign is indeed ‘hal’, an argument could be made for the Great King referring specifically to the king of Aleppo (hal-pa), the father of the king of Carchemish for whom the stele was erected.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Payne 2014, 74–75.

concrete physical object. Should the text refer to the same weapon of the Aleppan Storm-God of the earlier text, then the stele KARKAMIŠ A4b would be one of the last texts to make mention of the actual, physical weapon, placing its last whereabouts in 10th-century Carchemish. However, due to the wealth of logograms in the text of the stele, it is impossible to ascertain that the text refers specifically to the Aleppan weapon. The idea of the Storm-God sanctioning the military victory of the monarch is clear, however, even if the word is read as the abstract ‘courage’, following Payne.

The text of MARAŞ 1¹⁷⁷⁶ is inscribed on a portal lion, found in the Turkish city of Kahramanmaraş, ancient Gurgum. The inscription is dated to the time of Halparuntiyas/Qalparunda II, a contemporary to Shalmaneser III, and the inscription appears to contain more than a little influence from Assyrian royal inscriptions discussed in section 6.4.2. The text is as follows:

EGO-wa-mi-i ¹TONITRUS.HALPA-pa-ru-ti-i-ia-sa | ^{“IUDEX”}ta+r-wa-ni-sà | ku+r-ku-ma-wa-ni-i-sà^{URBS} REX-ti-i-sa | ¹la+r+a-ma-si-i-sa | LEPUS+r-ia-li-i-sa | ^{INFANS}mu-wa-za-sà ¹TONITRUS.HALPA-pa-ru-ti-i-ia-si-sà HEROS-li-sa ^{INFANS.NEPOS}ha-ma-si-sà-’ mu-wa-ta-li-si-sà | ^{“SCALPRUM+r-la”}wa+r-pa-li-sa | ^{INFANS.NEPOS}ha-ma-su-ka-la-sà ¹TONITRUS.HALPA-pa-CERVUS₂-ti-ia-si-sà ^{“IUDEX”}ta-r-wa-ni-sà | ^{INFANS}na-wa-sa ¹mu-wa-zi-si HEROS-li-sà | ^{INFANS}na-wa-na-wa-sà ¹la+r-a-ma-si-sà LEPUS+r-ia-li-sa | ^{INFANS}ha+r-tu-sà DEUS-na-ti ^{LITVUS}á-za-mi-sà CAPUT-ta-ti ^{LITVUS}u-ni-mi-sa | FINES-ha-ti AUDIRE-mi-sà REX-ti-sà ^{LITVUS}á-za-mi-sa | ^{BONUS}u-li-ia-mi-sà | ^{“PANIS.SCUTELLA”}mu-sa’-nu-wa-ti-sà | ^{“PANIS”}ma-li-[r+i]-mi-i-sà REX-ti-sà | wa-mu | á-mi-i-zi | tá-ti-zi DEUS-ni-zi-i | ^{LITVUS}á-za-ta | wa-mu-ta | á-mi | tá-ti-i | ^{THRONUS}i-sà-ta+r-ti-i ^{SOLIUM}i-sà-nu-wa-ta | a-wa | ^{“VACUUS”}ta-na-ta-’ ^{SOLIUM}i-sà-nu-wa-ha | ^{SOLIUM}(-?)ma-ma-pa-wa ^{BONUS}-u-su-ta+r-ha ^{DEUS}TONITRUS-hu-ta-sà-ti-i ^{DEUS}i-ia-sa-ti-ha LEPUS+r-ia-ti

I (am) Halparuntiyas, the ruler of the Gurgumeans, the king, son of Laramas the governor, grandson of Halparuntiyas the hero, great-grandson of Muwatilis the brave, great-great-grandson of Halparuntiyas the ruler, descendant of Muwizis the hero, offspring of the governor Laramas, the king loved by the gods, known by the people, heard of by the foreigners/border-dwellers, the beloved, exalted, respected (and) honey-sweet king. My ancestral gods loved me and they seated me on the throne of my father. I settled the devastated places and the settled places I made better. (I did this) by the power/authority of the Storm-God over the Sea-God.¹⁷⁷⁷

Payne translated the last part as “by the authority of the Storm god and the Sea god”. Payne interpreted the -ha following the name of the Sea-God as a post-positive connective particle, which is grammatically sound, but I suggest a dative/locative case-ending -ha following the name of the Sea-God, which would mean that the Storm-God and the Sea-God are in a different case.¹⁷⁷⁸ This

¹⁷⁷⁶ Text edition in Hawkins 2000, 261–265.

¹⁷⁷⁷ The reference is to the god of the sea and not to the sea as a physical body of water. Note that the text references the Mesopotamian god Ea, spelled syllabically ‘i-ia’.

¹⁷⁷⁸ The three final words of the inscription all seem to have the c.sg. ablative/instrumental case-ending -ati, literally “from the Storm-God, from the sea and from the authority”. Parsing the clause is difficult as it lacks a predicate (unless we look for a predicate in the verb ‘to settle’). The ablative in the name of the Sea-God could be caused by analogue or case-attraction,

interpretation is supported by the mythological material, as we do not have a single example of a text in which the Storm-God and his adversary, the Sea, are invoked together to bolster the claims of a monarch. The royal inscription also draws from a tradition in which it was the Storm-God's victory over the sea that ascertained the king's authority. But regardless of how the name of the Sea-God is parsed in the text, the inscription still witnesses to the king's use of the power and authority of the Storm-God to bolster his claims and to legitimize his rule in the Iron Age, whether or not the original Aleppan mythology was known by the Gurgumeans.

Myths of divine combat also feature prominently in Indo-Aryan mythological texts, and some comparisons between the myths of the Indian subcontinent and the ANE texts have been made (for example, by Wyatt).¹⁷⁷⁹ The Indo-European traditions of the dragon- or serpent-slaying myth have also been studied in detail by Watkins (1995). The contribution of Watkins is especially pertinent, as it examined the mythos in the context of poetics, breaking the narrative into its *basic formula* of (HERO) SLAYS SERPENT (WITH WEAPON).¹⁷⁸⁰ The basic formula highlights the difference between the Indo-Aryan and Amorite traditions, as the basic formula of the latter seems to be (STORM-GOD) CONQUERS SEA (WITH WEAPONS). Breaking the myths into their basic components is an important tool for their categorization, and it allows us to compare and contrast them with more accuracy. I have outlined some differences between the traditions in the footnote.¹⁷⁸¹

especially since the name is foreign.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Wyatt 2003b.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Watkins 1995, 301–302.

¹⁷⁸¹ The following table illustrates the taxonomy of myths of combat, from aspects shared by all myths and narratives down to the very specific type of myth found in the Amorite texts. The taxonomy is meant to highlight the differences of the Amorite myth and the Indo-Aryan myth on the one hand, and the aspects shared by all the NWS witnesses to the Combat Myth on the other.

The most relevant of the comparable Indo-Aryan myths would seem to be the battle between the weather-god Indra and the serpent Vṛtra, found in the *Rigveda*, which contains the oldest known texts from the Indian subcontinent. In the myth, the serpent holds all of the waters of the world hostage until he is slain by Indra, who wields a thunderbolt-weapon specially fashioned for him. Based on linguistic analysis, the *Rigveda* appears to have been composed in the 2nd millennium BCE,¹⁷⁸² making it roughly contemporary to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, although it was not written down until much later. Anthony writes: “But the deities, moral concepts, and Old Indic language of the *Rigveda* first appeared in written documents not in India but in *Northern Syria*” (italics in the original). The upper echelon (“all the Mitanni kings, first to last”) of the Mitanni Empire in the latter half of the 2nd millennium BCE consisted of Indo-Aryans.¹⁷⁸³ In contrast to the ruling class, the majority of people of the Mitanni Empire consisted of Hurrians.

The rule over Aleppo and the kingdom of Yamhad were contested by the Hittites and the Mitannians during this same period, and there had been a sizeable Hurrian population at Yamhad since the OB period. Hurrian texts have also been found in Ugarit and in the vicinity of Mari, witnessing to continued contact between the Hurrians and the Amorites. The Storm-God of Aleppo had a great deal of influence on the Anatolian Teshub. In fact, the Storm-God of Aleppo was called by the name Teshub, e.g. in *The Hurrian Prayer to Teshub of Aleppo* (KUB 47.78).¹⁷⁸⁴ According to Popko, among these elements that Teshub had adopted from the North Syrian area were the weapons featured in the “legend of the weather-god of Halab”, whose iconography I discuss in the next section.¹⁷⁸⁵

<u>Myth</u>	<u>Cultural sphere</u>
Myth of conflict (-resolution)	Universal
Myth of combat (Good vs. Evil, us vs. them, order vs. chaos)	Transcultural
Myth of warrior-god’s combat with adversary	Cultures with personified divinities
Myth of warrior- god’s combat with a monster	Metacultural
Myth of warrior storm-god’s combat with monster	Cultures with storm divinities
Myth of warrior storm-god’s combat with serpent/dragon using a tool	Indo-Aryan
Myth of warrior storm-god’s combat with a foe whose name is the “sea” using special weapons, becoming king of the gods through his victory	NWS

¹⁷⁸² Oberlies 1998, 155–158.

¹⁷⁸³ Anthony 2010, 49.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Translated by Schwemer 2001, 454.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Popko 1998, 75–76.

In the case that one myth of combat may have influenced the other, in this instance the Amorite myth is the one with greater antiquity.¹⁷⁸⁶ Based solely on the dating of the extant texts pertaining to the Combat Myth, it seems that the dissemination of the tradition was outward from the Amorite culture and the central cultic site of Aleppo. At least in the case of the Hittites, it was the mythology of the Aleppan Storm-God which was integrated into native traditions. But there may have been some Indo-European conceptions which were also adopted into NWS mythology, and the eventual anthropomorphization of the sea may well have been one of them.

6.2.3 Iconography of the Syrian-Anatolian Weather God and the Weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo

This chapter examines the iconographic evidence for the weather-god in the Syrian and Anatolian area, as well as some pertinent parallels from other areas. The concept of the divine weapons of the Storm-God is important in the framework of the use of the Combat Myth in political ideology, as it was especially when at the head of his army that the king took on the role of the Storm-God. In section 4.3, I have already discussed the physical divine weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo kept in the temple during the OB period; in this chapter I focus more on the evidence of the iconography. One must be careful, however, when interpreting iconography, as the information of the iconographic record sometimes accords poorly with the information in the textual record. The most important iconographic source for the object of this dissertation, beyond the Baal stele from Ugarit, is to be found on the reliefs of the so-called Temple of the Weather-God on the Aleppo citadel.

While these reliefs have been dated to the Hittite period, they are extremely significant, as Aleppo was the cult centre for the Upper Euphratean Storm-God for millennia. It was well-known that a temple for the Storm-God must have once stood in Aleppo, but it was not until 1996 that the temple was discovered on the Aleppo citadel by a Syrian-German team of archaeologists. The temple had been functional from EBA all the way down to Late Antiquity, broadly the timeframe under investigation in this thesis. The temple, under the aegis of the Amorite kingdom of

¹⁷⁸⁶ Fournet & Bomhard 2010, 1–3.

Yamhad, had been one of the most famous cult centres in all of the ANE, on par with the centres for Ishtar in Nineveh and Arbela, and the moon-god in Harran.¹⁷⁸⁷ A crucial factor in the dissemination of the mythology discussed in this thesis was the cult centre of the Upper Euphratean Storm-God as an international hub and a nexus of traditions.

Arguably the most significant findings in the temple of the Storm-God are the orthostat reliefs, some of which date back to the Bronze Age.¹⁷⁸⁸ The most important of these are the two reliefs on the east side of the temple cella, depicting the Storm-God and the king in mirror-image to one another.¹⁷⁸⁹ The effect of the composition may form the same kind of double-image of the king that I discussed in connection with the Ugaritic iconography. A guilloche pattern runs under the feet of the king, continuing into the purely ornamental reliefs on either side of the two figures. On the basis of the fact that the other reliefs in the cella have their feet at floor level and the figure of the king is elevated, standing on level with the figure of the weather-god, one could surmise that a guilloche pattern also ran under the feet of the weather-god but was chipped off at some point. In another relief the Storm-God is seen brandishing a club and three lightning bolts.

This relief of the Storm-God wielding weapons that are *in absentia* in his hands was the focal point of the entire temple.¹⁷⁹⁰ The relief also shows the king mimicking the Storm-God's position, likewise having empty hands which seem to grasp invisible weapons. The figure of the Storm-God is at the very least from the Hittite Empire period, while the image of the king was replaced by King Taita in the 11th century with his own image. One assumes that the image of an earlier king stood there prior to this. It could be noted that, according to one of Zimri-Lim's year-formulas, he himself offered his own statue to the Adad of Aleppo, and he raised an image of Adad in the temple, which suggests that the same symbolism was already a feature of the OB temple.¹⁷⁹¹ The symbolism of the invisible or absent weapons shared by the Storm-God and the king makes sense if one considers that, according to the Mari letters, the actual physical weapons of the Storm-God – the divine weapons with which he had defeated the sea – were manifest in this particular

¹⁷⁸⁷ See Gonnella, Khayyata & Kohlmeyer 2004. The final report had not been published by the time of the writing of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁸⁸ See Schwemer (2001, 211–219) for primary textual evidence on the temple.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Gonnella, Khayyata & Kohlmeyer 2004, Abb. 124 and 126. It does not appear as though the reliefs have an assigned accession number.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Hawkins 2011, 36.

¹⁷⁹¹ Green 2003, 171–172.

temple.

In the cult pedestal (*Symbolsockel*) of Tukulti-Ninurta I, we have an iconographic representation of a king and a divine weapon – not a weapon wielded by a deity, but a weapon of divine power as the object of worship, witnessing to the actual tradition of housing weapons in temples. The cult pedestal shows the king kneeling before the simulacrum of a cult pedestal or a throne on which the weapon of Nabu has been placed. The king himself is not holding the divine weapon, but has a sceptre in his left hand, suggesting that while the king's sceptre may have been a symbolic representation of the divine weapon, it was not the divine weapon *per se*. It is possible that a weapon similar to the one depicted on the cult pedestal was once actually placed on top of the cult pedestal, although no trace of the weapon has been found.¹⁷⁹² What the cult pedestal suggests is that the king did not handle the weapon. This is in line with evidence from Elam suggesting that litigants who touched the divine emblem lost its divine protection, as well as texts from Sippar suggesting that only temple personnel were permitted to handle the weapons.¹⁷⁹³

According to Hamblin, weapons in the ANE were viewed as magical objects of divine power, and as such they would have been considered the real source of military victories. Hamblin theorized that the divine weapons housed in temples may have factually been either ancestral weapons, ritually consecrated weapons, or even weapons worked from meteoric iron.¹⁷⁹⁴ While we know next to nothing about the physical characteristics of the weapons in the texts, Malamat remarked that it is likely that they were similar to ones illustrated on Syrian seals of the OB period. He disabused the reader of the notion that the weapons would have resembled the club and spear of the Ugaritic myth, which “were depicted four or five hundred years later on the stele of ‘Baal and the thunderbolt!’”¹⁷⁹⁵ There are two factors which argue against this proposition: the fact that the weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo were known among the Hittites, who were the direct recipients of the Aleppan traditions, specifically as the mace and the spear,¹⁷⁹⁶ and the fact that a mace and a spear are the weapons carved into the

¹⁷⁹² Kühne & Röhlig 1989, 296 (Pl. 51,3); Orthmann 1975, Abb. 195.

¹⁷⁹³ Spaey 1993, 412, 416.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Hamblin 2006, 99.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Malamat 1998, 27.

¹⁷⁹⁶ According to Bunnens 2006, 65. See also Williams-Forte (1983, 25) who listed as the Storm-God's attributes in the Syrian and Anatolian areas weapons featuring the mace or the axe, on the one hand, and the spear-like lightning weapon, on the other. See Kang (1989, 55) for an

walls of the temple of the Storm-God on the Aleppo citadel.

The weapons of the Storm-God are mentioned in the fragmentary Hittite mythological text CTH 350.3, in which the location of the (apparently hidden) weapons of the Storm-God is known to the mountain Bišaiša.¹⁷⁹⁷ The club seems to be wielded by the Aleppan Storm-God, as depicted in the orthostat reliefs in the very temple of Adad (ALEPPO 4).¹⁷⁹⁸ After the discovery of the reliefs in the Aleppo temple, we may have a rather accurate iconographic representation of the weapons. As they were physically manifest in the temple, it does not make sense for the reliefs¹⁷⁹⁹ to depict weapons in a radically different way from the ones that at least some of the temple personnel bore witness to every day.¹⁸⁰⁰ If the temple of Adad indeed housed the Storm-God's weapons prior to their (likely temporary) delivery to Mari territory, why would the walls of the temple have depicted different weapons? All of the evidence available to us points to the mace and the spear specifically as the two weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo.

The weapons of the Storm-God portrayed in the bulk of the Syrian iconographic material, as well as in the stele from Ugarit, are a club and a "lightning-tree", the concept of which has been researched relatively little. The so-called lightning-tree – a weapon wielded by a god of storms or weather resembling a tree or a tree branch – first appears in EBA Syria. In an article based on her unpublished dissertation, E. Williams-Forte (1983) traced the evolution of the motif ("complex cycle of images"), beginning with the weather-god wielding a tree-weapon, to the weather-god and the king ("worshiper") flanking the tree, to the king flanking the tree on his own,¹⁸⁰¹ to a depiction of the tree ("the victorious tree-standard") – the symbol of the Storm-God as a warrior – on its own. She suggested that the iconography developed in such a way that while the weather-god himself first became associated with the symbol of the weapon he wielded – the lightning depicted in the form of a tree – the deity later became one iconic entity with it. Eventually the king was also identified with the tree and thereby

overview of the kinds of weapons found on the stelae of the Hittite Storm-God.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Discussed by Schwemer 2003, 226–232.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Popko (1998, 76) also submitted that the idea for the weapons of Ugaritic myth and the local Ugaritic weather-god came from Aleppo.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Reliefs other than the image of the king mirroring the god with absent weapons do feature depictions of weapons.

¹⁸⁰⁰ According to Schwemer (2001, 226–227), the temple of Adad in Aleppo was where the weapons were ordinarily kept.

¹⁸⁰¹ The figures of the weather-god and the king can be easily differentiated by their head gear. The weather-god donned horns, while the king's head-gear lacks them.

also with the god it represented. In the last stage, the lone tree figure symbolized the entire cycle. This succession of motifs represents a pictorial narrative of how the weather-god granted the king, through his weapon, the use of his divine power and authority.¹⁸⁰²

The motif of a tree that resembles lightning flanked by two figures, one of which may represent the king, is also found on a Mitannian seal impression from Hazor.¹⁸⁰³ This suggests that the same cycle of images was not unknown in the area of Palestine in the LBA. The god and the lightning-tree is a visual depiction of the Combat Myth, and the proliferation of the motif corresponds with the textual examples. As time passed, the entire mythical cycle of images became *compressed* into the image of the tree alone, the tree standing for the lightning, the wielder of the lightning, the battle that the wielder of the lightning had fought, and the king to whom he dedicated this victory – all at the same time. The tree symbolized the divine authority with which the king reigned and which gave him the right to rule, containing in its single image the entire mythological constellation. It is only through an understanding of this compression of imagery in light of Amorite political terminology that we may gain understanding of texts such as Jer. 2:27, which mentions “those who are saying to a tree, ‘You are my father’”. This curious reference might allude to the swearing of fealty to the image of the (imperial) monarch, in light of the Amorite proto-state treaties discussed in section 5.1.2.

There are allusions to this motif in certain Biblical texts, most prominently in Ps. 80:11–12, which refers to the “cedars of God” (עֲצֵי יְיָ), whose branches are flung to the sea, alluding to the Combat Myth. The cedar (*arz.b ymnh*, “the cedar in his right hand”) is also mentioned in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (KTU 1.4 VII 41), which refers to the lightning-tree weapon of Baal. According to Ornan, this passage recalls various associations between a prominent male divinity and tree motifs from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age in the Syrian area.¹⁸⁰⁴ Lambert accepted the association of tree and lightning, but wonders if a weapon made of wood rather than the whole tree is meant by the term.¹⁸⁰⁵ I see no reason why the lightning-tree and cedar could not symbolically refer to actual lightning, which

¹⁸⁰² This is what Schwemer (2001, 226) believed that the Mari weapons had done. On the blurring lines between the weather-god and the king, see Müller 2008, 244–248.

¹⁸⁰³ Ornan 2011, 264 (fig. 13).

¹⁸⁰⁴ Ornan 2011, 272.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Lambert 1985a, 442.

may well have been manifest as a physical weapon (spear, lance, trident – or even the kind of vegetal sceptre we find in later Phoenician iconography (supported by archaeological finds), dubbed the “staff of judgement” or “sceptre of his judiciary” (e.g. in the Ahiiram inscription, KAI 1), fashioned at least partially of wood.

The same tradition may be alluded to by the Leiden Magical Papyrus (P.Leiden 345 r. IV 12–V 2), whose incantation reads “Baal smites you with the cedar tree which is in his hand”. The text is from the Memphian cult centre of Baal, which indicates that the association of tree and lightning as the Storm-God’s weapon was widespread in the ANE. This can be compared with Ps. 104:16, featuring the parallelism of “trees of Yahweh (עֲצֵי יְהוָה) and cedars of Lebanon (אַרְזֵי לְבָנוֹן)”. There are also several passages in the Book of Isaiah that may hold a connection to the concept of the divine weapon used by the Storm-God in defeating his adversary on behalf of the mortal king. In the Isaiahic text, these references seem to be connected to the Exodus tradition, bringing the combat aspect back to a motif which is usually considered demythologized or historicized.¹⁸⁰⁶ These passages include Is. 10:26,¹⁸⁰⁷ 11:15,¹⁸⁰⁸ and 23:11.¹⁸⁰⁹

Silver tridents were also found among the funerary items of the early 18th-century BCE Byblian king, Abishemu. According to Jidejian, they were “probably carried as symbols of power by the sea-faring kings of ancient Byblos”.¹⁸¹⁰ While she makes no mention of it, it is possible that the shiny metallic trident symbolized lightning. Niehr further speculated on whether the menorah in the 5th vision of Zechariah was meant to preserve a continuity between the first and the second temples, symbolizing Yahweh in the second temple where his statue had resided in the first temple.¹⁸¹¹ The menorah (“a tree of light”) as the symbol of Yahweh might therefore have its origins in the lightning-tree, the weapon of the Storm-God. This is speculative, of course, but the longevity of the symbol in the

¹⁸⁰⁶ E.g. Day 1985, 96–101, 182. Day’s discussion is made problematic by the fact that he does not question the historicity of the Exodus-narratives in any way. This is a controversial issue to be sure, but requires consideration.

¹⁸⁰⁷ “And Yahweh of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and *his staff will be over the sea*, and he will lift it up the way he did in Egypt”.

¹⁸⁰⁸ “And Yahweh will utterly destroy the tongue of the *Sea of Egypt*; and He will wave *his hand over the River* with his scorching wind; and He will strike it into *seven streams*, and make men walk over dry-shod”.

¹⁸⁰⁹ “He has stretched *his hand out over the sea*, he has made the kingdoms tremble; Yahweh has given a command concerning Canaan to demolish its strongholds”.

¹⁸¹⁰ Jidejian 1992, 102. Furthermore, a curved bronze-gold scimitar was found in the grave of his son, Ibshemuabi (p. 112).

¹⁸¹¹ Niehr 1997, 4.

ANE must also be recognized. The lightning-tree weapon may also be explicitly referenced in KTU 1.101, which mentions ‘š *brq* (‘tree of lightning’). The club and the vegetal weapon of the Storm-God can also be found in a Hittite cylinder seal impression from Ugarit.¹⁸¹² Williams-Forte attributed the portrayal of the Storm-God’s weapon in the form of a tree to the idea of fertility associated with the deity, calling it “virtually a ‘tree of life’”.¹⁸¹³

Some evidence for the political use of the Combat Myth may be surmised from the evolution of the motif of the “lightning-tree” in Syrian and Anatolian art of the Bronze Age. Anatolian iconography was familiar to Ugaritians at least to some extent, as evidenced by the discovery of the tablet of Ini-Teshub of Carchemish (RS 17.146) from Ugarit.¹⁸¹⁴ Wyatt explained that the worship of the weapons of the god was understood as transferring divine power to the king, legitimizing his rule (although it should be noted that nowhere is it stated that the kings given divine weapons could *keep* them indefinitely, as in the OB period they were a business venture for the clerics).¹⁸¹⁵ This concept is surely the same as we find in the Zimri-Lim text FM 7 38. According to Bunnens, this is also a part of the process which led to kings being portrayed as storm-gods.¹⁸¹⁶ While kingship on earth was modelled after the ideal kingship in heaven, so was the kingship in heaven fashioned after kingship on earth. In Egyptian iconography the pharaoh can be seen crushing his enemies with a ceremonial mace head,¹⁸¹⁷ but as stated in other parts of this dissertation, the Egyptian pharaoh was thought to be at least partially divine himself.

Later Assyrian reliefs, which may represent a continuation of the motif, even depict the king impersonating the tree, taking the tree’s place in the iconographic complex. It thus makes the connection between the king and the tree explicit. It is well known that the Assyrians borrowed most of their iconography from their northern and southern neighbours, but this does not necessarily mean that mythological or religious ideas were passed along with the artistic renderings. It is worth noting, however, that in the famous relief of Aššurnasirpal II (ME 124531), where the king is depicted flanking the tree under the symbol of divine might, a scene reminiscent of several Syrian cylinder seals, the accompanying text tells us

¹⁸¹² Schaeffer 1956, xx, Fig. 68.

¹⁸¹³ Williams-Forte 1983, 39. “[...] the ‘cedar’ weapon symbolizes, as well, the lightning source of the weather god’s fertility [...]”. See Widengren 1958, 169, who associates the tree of life with the king’s sceptre.

¹⁸¹⁴ Alexander 1993, 9.

¹⁸¹⁵ Wyatt 1998, 284–285; Töyräänvuori 2012.

¹⁸¹⁶ Bunnens 2006, 65.

¹⁸¹⁷ See Yeivin 1934, 226.

that he is represented there as the “vice-regent of Aššur” (*iššakki aššur*), which is to say, the user of the god Aššur’s power and authority in the god’s absence. According to Edelman, the “house of David” also functioned as the vice-regents of Yahweh in the Pre-Exilic period.¹⁸¹⁸

There may also be a textual reference to the actual divine weapon in the Ugaritic texts (in KTU 2.10). The text is a letter, not a mythological text, concerning the confirmation of a defeat suffered by the army. On l. 11–12 we find: *w.yd/ilm.p.kmtm*, ‘And the hand of the god(s)/El, truly it will be/ is as strong as Death’.¹⁸¹⁹ The hand of the god is clearly referring to a weapon in this text, although it is unclear whether it is a weapon physically wielded by someone or whether the term is being used in a divinatory sense (to gain an answer) or to extract an oath. In any case, it is an important piece of evidence regarding the use of divine weapons in Ugarit outside of a purely mythological context, which also offers support for the idea in the Hebrew texts of ‘the hand’ as a weapon.

Note also the ‘staff of the hand of the king’ (^{GIŠ}*hu-tar-tú šá ŠU MAN*) claimed as tribute by Shalmaneser III from Jehu in the Black Obelisk, A.0.102.88. In light of the traditions discussed in this dissertation, a translation of “the staff which is (named) ‘*The Hand of the King*’” may also be considered. It must be stressed that the references to cedar trees in this context are not insignificant. We find mentions of them in the Ugaritic texts, in Biblical poetry, in the Mari letters and inscriptions, and on the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions.¹⁸²⁰ The image of cutting down a cedar was also established by Machinist (1983) as containing actual influence of Assyrian royal inscriptions in Proto-Isaiah. A precious commodity in the ancient world, the undecaying cedars of Lebanon were used for ship masts and the building of massive structures, such as palaces.¹⁸²¹ Therefore, it is not surprising that cedar wood, a commodity for which kings staged military campaigns, was a symbol of power.

But I would also like to submit a simpler solution for the portrayal of the divine weapon in tree form: lightning branching across the sky resembles a tree

¹⁸¹⁸ Edelman 2009, 81.

¹⁸¹⁹ Translated as “the love of the gods is *here* as death” by Ginsberg & Maisler 1934, 243.

¹⁸²⁰ The significance of the cedar in royal inscriptions is probably due to the mention in Sargon’s royal inscription (E2.1.1.11) of Sargon conquering the Amorite lands (‘Upper lands’, KALAM IGI.NIM), including Mari, Iarmuti, Ebla as far as *the Cedar Forest* (TIR ^{GIS}ERIN) and the Silver Mountains (KUR.KUR KÙ) with the blessing of the Amorite storm-god Dagan. Also E2.1.1.12.

¹⁸²¹ Jidejian 1992, 31. From 2800 BCE onwards, it was especially the city of Byblos that functioned as the central site from which cedar wood was distributed.

(forming a radial pattern called the ‘Lichtenberg figure’).¹⁸²² Lightning may very well have been conceived of – and certainly was represented in iconography – as a tree of light or a tree of divine power.¹⁸²³ The obvious way of portraying the ‘heavenly tree’ in the mortal world was as an ordinary tree. But a tree or a vegetal staff symbolizing the power of lightning is not a weapon as such, so how then could the lightning-tree have been manifest as a customary weapon? We are hinted at the solution in the sharp tip of the vegetal staff of the Ugaritic *Baal au foudre* stele. The weapon on the stele is half tree, but it is also clearly half weapon, with its lower half representing a lance or a spear. Both aspects of the power of the Storm-God’s divine domain – thunder (auditory) and lightning (visual) – seem to be represented in the visual media of the NWS cultural area.

The sound of thunder is represented by striking weapons of hewn stone or metal: clubs, maces, hammers, and axes. The flash of lightning is manifested as long, wooden throwing or thrusting weapons with a sharpened tip: lances, spears and staffs.¹⁸²⁴ In Syrian-Anatolian iconography, the Storm-God often also has a sword or dagger of some kind; however, this is not a weapon that he wields against his enemies or uses to assert his authority, but one that is kept in its scabbard.¹⁸²⁵ According to Wright, the arm has a jointed form resembling lightning, which he connected to the Phoenician alphabetic *yod*, with the fingers of the hand being imagined as flames, which could explain why the hand symbolized the weapon of the Storm-God specifically.¹⁸²⁶ According to L’Orange, the raising of the right hand was a sign of the omnipotence of the gods in the ANE, and in the texts of the HB we find in the concept of Yahweh’s “outstretched”, “raised” or “high” hand the supernatural power and divine nature originally present in the gesture.¹⁸²⁷

A club or a hammer – a striking weapon – could certainly have been one of the Storm-God’s weapons, as the association seems to have had a cross-cultural

¹⁸²² See P. T. Riess, “Über elektrische Figuren und Bilde,” *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 145/9 [1846], 1–44. The figure was first identified by and subsequently named after G. C. Lichtenberg’s *De nova methodo naturam ac motum fluidi electrici investigandi* [Göttingen: 1777].

¹⁸²³ Also Schwemer (2008b, 36), according to whom the vegetal lance of the Ugaritic stele “may rather be a pictorial representation of the rolling thunder”.

¹⁸²⁴ See Green (2003, 154–165) for examples of the Storm-God’s lance as lightning. He also called the spears of the Ugaritic stele a “stylized thunderbolt”.

¹⁸²⁵ See examples of seal impressions in Williams-Forte 1983, 39–43; Moortgat-Correns 1986, 188; Green 2003, 154–165.

¹⁸²⁶ Wright 2001, 154.

¹⁸²⁷ L’Orange 1953, 159–160.

mythological foundation. Many Syrian and Anatolian reliefs depict the weather-god (Adad or Tarhunt) holding a lightning weapon in one hand and a hammer or striking weapon in the other.¹⁸²⁸ Note also the mention of Baal KRNTYŠ in the Azatiwada inscription (KAI 26:2.19), which seems to be a Luwian name for the Storm-God of Aleppo, referencing his mace and paralleling the *b'l šmd* (KAI 24:15) of the Kulamuwa inscription.¹⁸²⁹ According to Gibson, the mace was not used as a weapon by humans in ancient Mesopotamia, but was rather a symbol of power, a weapon symbolic of weapons in general, and the symbol of the sanctioned use of power.¹⁸³⁰ As such, it seems like a prime candidate for a divine weapon. Based on the iconographic evidence, the weapons housed in the temple of Aleppo could well have featured a mace and spear like the ones depicted on the Ugaritic stele. A point of connection with both the Ugaritic stele, the Ugaritic myth of the Baal Cycle, and the Zimri-Lim letter can be found in the fact that the weapons number in the plural.

Ornan (2011) interpreted the tree and horned animals motif as a divine marker for the storm-god Baal specifically, associating the motif with the god's fertility. She also identified the "Baal with the crown of leaves" -stele from Ugarit as representing the motif of Baal being crowned with a tree or branch. She also suspected that a poorly preserved seated bronze figurine from Megiddo also contains this motif on its headgear, albeit in a more stylized form. The Megiddo figurine with the vegetal emblem is likewise a seated deity, possibly indicating the Storm-God as a monarchic god. A further possible reference to the myth may be found in a Hittite ivory from Megiddo of two figures, one which Frayne identified with the monster Leviathan.¹⁸³¹

Ornan also discussed a figurine (unfortunately lacking provenance) from Qatna wearing a horned head-dress, which may have depicted a deified ruler. While

¹⁸²⁸ See Genze 1979, Abb. 15, 17, 18, 22 (in Abb. 19 and 20 the weather-god holds only the lightning weapon, and in Abb. 16 he holds the striking weapon in one hand while strangling a serpent with the other hand). It must also be pointed out that an ornamental, apparently ritual axe-head (RS 9.250) was found in the Hurrian temple at Ugarit. The connection between gods of thunder and striking weapons such as hammers is cross-cultural (perhaps even metacultural) – one need only recall the weapon Mjölnir of the Nordic Thor. The Finno-Ugric smith-hero Ilmari/Inmar seems also to have originally been conceived of as a weather-god. Siikala 2002, 171. Perhaps the concept of the anthropomorphic weather-god warrior armed with striking weapons followed at the heels of the spread of ironmongery.

¹⁸²⁹ Schmitz 2009, 121; Niehr 2014, 175. The *šmd* is also found in connection with Baal in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. For discussion, see Smith 1994, 338.

¹⁸³⁰ Gibson 1964, 181.

¹⁸³¹ Frayne 2013, 82–83. The Leviathan figures are on "the extreme left and right sides of the third register from the top of the plaque". I am unconvinced by his identification of the winged chimaera as the Leviathan, but it remains a possibility.

she argued that kings are never found wearing horned mitres in ANE art outside of the Naram-Sin Victory Stele, the conflation or coalescence of the roles of king, dead king, and monarchic divinity argues against drawing such strict dividing lines between the categories.¹⁸³² It must be said that such images of kings (or weather-gods) and trees were associated with fertility from early on, as was the entire entity of the weather-god who, by bringing the autumnal rains, guaranteed the success of the harvest. While there is still a tendency to interpret certain aspects of Eastern Mediterranean LBA religious concepts as representing fertility cults,¹⁸³³ new interpretations for these themes have been suggested of late.¹⁸³⁴

Ornan ignored the martial aspects of the god's symbolism and the likely derivation of these symbols from natural phenomena, going on to state that the connection of a male warrior-god like Baal to fertility is "not at all surprising", without offering any explanation for it. While the association of rain with fertility is self-evident, its association with thunder and lightning is not as clear-cut. And although fertility is quite likely one of the aspects associated with the god, all of these aspects ultimately derive from its association with power, virility, and (male) dominance, and it was this association between the Storm-God and power that made him the perfect monarchic divinity. The god's virility emphasized it as a symbol of power, not fertility as such. Pictorial depictions are powerful media for transmitting concepts, and it makes little sense for such a medium to be used to iterate something taken for granted to be cyclically recurring and having no clear agenda beyond reinforcing the natural order. Visual propaganda is meant to *impress* a thing, and the concept of fertility *an Sich* requires no such emphasis.

Williams-Forte made a further connection between the lightning-tree that the weather-god is seen brandishing in iconography and the "word of tree" mentioned in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. In KTU 1.3 III 22–23). It seems to be used as a part of a

¹⁸³² Ornan 2011, 269–273. See also Yon 1991, 290.

¹⁸³³ See e.g. Ornan 2011, 271: "From the meaning assigned to the tree-and-horned-animals icon, which connects it with a wide spectrum of aspects related to fertility, I conclude that the Hazor statue can be identified as Baal, who was strongly associated with the fertility of the land by virtue of his patronage of rains and storms, as related in the Ugaritic narrative and echoed in the Bible". On p. 272 she continues: "the diversity of renderings of the god with the tree motifs may mirror the wide spectrum of propagation and fertility powers assigned to him".

¹⁸³⁴ Green 2003, 284: "Baal's quintessential characteristic in this region was his role as a fertility deity. [...] He was the guarantor of fertilizing rainstorms, the basic fundamental for survival in Western Syria. It was Baal's unique attribute as a fertility deity that propelled him to the kingship among the gods and that provided the most appropriate dramatization of his power". There is no textual basis for assuming that Baal's fertility was a factor in his becoming the king of the gods, when all of the examples of the myth of combat from the area explicitly make his martial prowess the deciding factor. Fertility seemed textually connected to the god El.

message formula, with the messages between Baal and Anat being prefaced by several lines of repeated text. Williams-Forte suggested that the “word of tree and whisper of stone” may refer to lightning, and thereby to Baal’s weapon. According to Burkert the parallelism of tree and stone seems to be connected with a myth on the origin of man both in the Biblical text and in the *Odyssey*.¹⁸³⁵ Tree and stone are also found as a parallel pair in several Biblical texts¹⁸³⁶ (e.g. in Jer. 2:27,¹⁸³⁷ Is. 37:19¹⁸³⁸ (paralleled in 2 Kgs.19:18), 60:17,¹⁸³⁹ Sam. 5:11,¹⁸⁴⁰ Ex. 31:5, 35:33,¹⁸⁴¹ Hab. 2:11,¹⁸⁴² and 2:19),¹⁸⁴³ in which it is noticeable that the awakening is again connected with the possible divine weapon. In this curious passage the “tree” and “stone” seem to be covered in precious metals and they are used for instruction of some sort.

Considering the traditions discussed here, the passage may well refer to a practice of using the spear (‘tree’) and the mace (‘stone’) in litigation, with the prophet admonishing against the primitive practice.¹⁸⁴⁴ One may also note the “stones of fire” (אֲבָנֵי-אֵשׁ) on the mountain in Ez. 28:14. The context of most of the Biblical references seems to betray a pre-monotheistic animistic or polytheistic cultic setting, which is being criticized in the text.¹⁸⁴⁵ The spear and the mace are also seen as the weapons or symbols of power of the king in several Assyrian reliefs, which may offer a more immediate reference to this symbolism than the OB weapons. Of course, it must be admitted that the motifs of tree and stone likely functioned as a simple poetic parallel pair, and may allude to nothing but the elements themselves. In light of the adoption formula, however, the tree should probably be understood as a reference to a monarch, whether the local king or the

¹⁸³⁵ Burkert 1992, 119.

¹⁸³⁶ See Watson 1972, 465.

¹⁸³⁷ “Those who are saying to a tree, ‘you are my father’, and to a stone, ‘you have brought me forth’”.

¹⁸³⁸ “Work of the hands of man, wood and stone”.

¹⁸³⁹ “Under the trees I will bring brass, under the stones I will bring iron”.

¹⁸⁴⁰ “Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David with cedar trees and tree-cutters and cutters of stone”.

¹⁸⁴¹ “And for the cutting of stone for the filling and the cutting of wood for the work...”.

¹⁸⁴² “For a stone of the wall will call out, and a beam of the tree shall answer it”.

¹⁸⁴³ “Woe unto him that says to a tree ‘Awake!’, to a mute stone ‘Arise!’ Shall it teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all inside it”.

¹⁸⁴⁴ Also 2 Sam. 5:11, Ex. 31:5, 35:33, and contrasted in Ez. 28:14. Note, however, Archi (1998, 20), according to whom the stone stelae of 3rd-millennium BCE Ebla were decorated with metals. Metal objects were also used for the cult of the stelae.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Lewis (2011, 215) connected the ‘word of wood’ with incantation vocabulary and thinks it has “a magical quality to it”. On the formation of the Hebrew pantheon, see Handy 1994; 1995. On the false dichotomy of monotheistic Israel and its polytheistic neighbours, see Parker 1997b, 137ff.

imperial king.

I find it difficult to see the connection between these passages and a myth concerning the origin of mankind. The majority of them instead seem to refer either to building or to idols (or statuettes of gods). The Jeremiahic passage is particularly interesting with regard to the Amorite tradition. If we were to read the passage literally as saying ‘my father’ to a tree, it might be understood as the giving of a royal oath, with the tree and the stone (weapon) symbolizing the king. Likely, however, it was the newly appointed king himself that made this oath to the tree, standing in for the Storm-God which, at least in the Amorite world, had also stood for a senior king. It could even be that the weapons of the Storm-God were transported especially for the giving of oaths of fealty at the beginning of the reigns of newly appointed kings. What remains is that none of the Biblical references to tree and stone parallel the Ugaritic usage exactly,¹⁸⁴⁶ which may indicate a reworking of the traditional material by the prophets. The Jeremiahic passage reads like ironic political commentary.

M. Hasel, who studied Assyrian iconography in the context of their military tactics, made the observation that the Assyrian pictorial sources show fruit trees remaining standing during siege scenes, and that these were “cut down only subsequent to the defeat of the enemy city”. Hasel seems to suggest that this reflects actual military activity, portraying the siege under way on the one hand and the city after it had been conquered, on the other.¹⁸⁴⁷ This is certainly a plausible explanation for the depictions. But we may also consider the political implications of these scenes. If the tree was iconographic short-hand for the king, the cutting down of the trees implied the cutting down of the powerbase of the conquered king – the court. This is the probable implied political meaning of the scenes, even if we consider the actual physical groves mentioned in connection with palaces (cf. 2. Kgs. 21:3).¹⁸⁴⁸

The king and the tree motif were also associated by S. Parpola in his seminal work on the Assyrian tree-of-life motif. While recognizing the iconographic motif, he found no written evidence for the concept in the Assyrian area:

The complete lack of references to such an important symbol in contemporary written sources can only mean that the doctrines relating to the Tree were never committed to

¹⁸⁴⁶ Burkert (1992, 119) considered the Ugaritic usage “less lucid” than the Biblical. In the passages referencing building specifically, this may well be the case, although language of this kind should be avoided.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Hasel 2005, 65.

¹⁸⁴⁸ The chapter seems to contain Aramaic influences, the dating of which are uncertain. Rendsburg 2003, 117–122.

writing by the scholarly elite who forged the imperial ideology but were circulated orally.¹⁸⁴⁹ It could also mean that the Neo-Assyrian “scholarly elite” simply did not know about all the nuances of this old and adopted royal iconography, as it presents a powerful symbol even in the absence of some hidden esoteric meaning. Furthermore, we are in possession of some NWS texts concerning the relationship of the tree and the weather-god, although admittedly they do not offer us a well-formulated explanation of this relationship, which remains implicit. It also begs the question of why the scholarly elite would not have explicitly committed this imperial ideology to writing. While there is some discussion regarding the levels of literacy possessed in ancient societies, reading and writing were to a large extent *elite skills*. The reading of texts, let alone texts written for the use of (and within) the palace, was hardly an occupation for the layperson to begin with,¹⁸⁵⁰ so the fear that texts written by the scholarly elite might be read by people not belonging to the scholarly elite seems anachronistic. If anything, committing the esoteric knowledge of the scholarly elite to writing would have ensured their continued existence and perusal.

Furthermore, ideology is social property. A set of ideas becomes an ideology only when it is shared by and projected onto an entire section of society.¹⁸⁵¹ An ideology, often made of both conscious and unconscious ideas, need not be overt or explicit, but it cannot be *secret*. A dominant class needs to project the ideology onto society, or parts of the society, in order for it to function as an ideology.¹⁸⁵² When one observes only the oldest images of the theme (those of a weather-god brandishing a stick of wood) and the latest images (consisting of a highly stylized tree which may be flanked by two creatures), it may be difficult to see the connection between the motifs. However, the picture becomes much clearer when one observes the images step by step – evolving, as it were – to encompass the ideology and to represent in a single symbol, *pars pro toto*, the iconic constellation for the legitimization of the king’s power as the representative of a god among his subjects. This legitimization did not necessarily represent the amalgamation of god and king as an Egyptian type of god-king, which may have required an entirely

¹⁸⁴⁹ Parpola 1993, 168.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Indeed, it seems that even most royal figures did not possess this skill and were dependent on the scholarly elite for their written correspondence. There are some members of royal families – even royal women – who are suspected of having known how to read and write, but these occurrences are always rare enough to warrant mention and therefore go against the norm, which is why one cannot assume that this was a widely possessed skill among royal figures.

¹⁸⁵¹ Barr 2000, 105.

¹⁸⁵² See Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) for the concept of ideology as a ‘received consciousness’.

different kind of legitimization, but as a human vessel of divine authority and might. But it was the political force exerted by the king that was at the centre of this symbolism.

6.2.4 Summary and Discussion

The Syrian and Anatolian references to the Combat Myth are important for the discussion of the Mariote and Ugaritic versions of the myth, not only for the possible influence of the traditions of the former on the Anatolian weather-god, but also for the contrast that the Indo-Aryan traditions offer for the NWS ones. It is especially significant because the Hittite Empire was the inheritor of the Amorite-Hurrian kingdom of Yamhad and the recipient of the Aleppan traditions, having absorbed the mythologies and the traditions of the city. The Hittite texts witness to the anthropomorphization of the sea of the Combat Myth and to a female personification of the sun, aspects which the Ugaritic myths share with the Hittite tradition, in contrast to the Amorite witnesses (regarding the former aspect) and the later HB traditions (regarding the latter). The earlier texts from Ebla witness to the fact that the sea was not a feature of the Combat Myth prior to the character of Sargon entering the mythological narrative.

The iconography of the Syrian area helps us to understand implicit ideological aspects of the myth which are not explicitly explained by the texts. One of the most important facets of the iconography is the weapon of the Storm-God, especially the divine weapon of the Storm-God of Aleppo, by means of which the political mythology was physically transported to the recipients of the Amorite traditions. The weapons of the Storm-God were a mace and a spear, the concepts of which may hark back to the Sargonic period, as there is evidence of Sargon dedicating mace-heads to divinities and Sargon's successors revering his weapons as ancestral weapons. It is possible that the poetic word-pair of tree and stone should refer to these divine weapons both in the Ugaritic and Biblical textual traditions, although it would seem that the concept was mythologized and no longer in active use in either tradition. Divine weapons are also a standard aspect of the iconographies of ANE deities, and indeed one of the main clues by means of which we can tell different divinities apart from one another. Yet there is an undeniable connection between the Storm-God and these weapons specifically,

so to find them in a mythic constellation containing other aspects of the Combat Myth may be one of the ways in which vestiges of the mythic tradition may be detected in later traditions.

The sea is also mentioned in a few inscriptions from other centres of the NWS cultural sphere, which I discuss in the next chapter. Since it is possible that these references attest to knowledge and awareness of the tradition, if not a widespread use of it, I will next review the evidence briefly.

6.3 The Sea of Combat Myth in Other Ancient North West Semitic Textual Sources

6.3.1 Emar

According to a year-formula of Yahdun-Lim of Mari, the Mariote king conquered or defeated the Yamhadian city of Emar during his reign.¹⁸⁵³ This year-formula demonstrates contact between Emar and Mari during the Amorite kingdom period. The Mariote text ARM 11:14 also witnesses to a trade relationship between the cities of Mari and Emar. In the texts from Emar, there is only one reference which has been connected with the Combat Myth. In the text EMAR VI:3, a goddess called “Ashtar *ša abi*” is mentioned; she has been interpreted as Ishtar or Astarte of the sea (e.g. Arnaud derived the latter word from the Sumerogram A.AB.BA rather than from *abūm*, ‘father’).¹⁸⁵⁴ While Oliva has argued against this interpretation, it does seem to parallel the epithet of Asherah – *rbt atrt ym* – in the Ugaritic texts (e.g. KTU 1.4. V 2), translated usually as “the Great Asherah of the sea”.¹⁸⁵⁵

The close affinity between the Sumerogram and the syllabic rendering may illuminate the relationship between Astarte and the sea, if the sea is interpreted as the father of the goddess. I discuss the concept of Aphrodite – an Aegean goddess likened to Asherah born out of the sea – in a subsequent chapter in connection with the Eastern Mediterranean traditions. According to Zadok, the name Yamm is also mentioned in the Emar texts in the form of ^d*Ia-a-mi*,¹⁸⁵⁶ but the identification is uncertain and not in the context of a myth of combat. The Emar texts add little

¹⁸⁵³ Malamat 1965, 370.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Arnaud 1986.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Oliva 1993.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Zadok 1991, 125.

to our understanding of the political use of the Combat Myth, but as the city appears to have been in the Mariote sphere of interest during the Amorite kingdom period, the absence of mentions of or references to the myth in the city may function as negative evidence, and it certainly stands in contrast to the evidence from ancient Alalakh, discussed next.

6.3.2 Alalakh

In this chapter I examine the witness of the Amorite texts from the OB period discovered in ancient Alalakh (Tell Atchana). Alalakh was a vassal state of Yamhad during its golden age, and as such it may help to frame the Amorite political system underlying the traditions. The texts from the city add to our perusal an important textual depository from the era of Mari, as Alalakh (Alalakhtum) was initially a part of the kingdom of Yamhad and then a Mariote vassal during the reign of Zimri-Lim, until it returned under the control of Yamhad after the downfall of Mari. Alalakh was situated on the bend of the Orontes River, half-way between Aleppo and Ugarit. The city was politically important to Aleppo, as the way to the coast went through Alalakh. The texts provide insight into the political organization of the Amorite kingdoms in the OB period. Because the city of Aleppo has been continuously inhabited and no extensive archaeological excavations to Bronze Age levels have been conducted in the location apart from the temple of the Storm-God on the citadel, most of what is known about the kingdom of Yamhad actually comes from the archives of Mari and Alalakh.

The kings of Alalakh were related to the dynastic line of Yamhad in the period of the Amorite kingdoms, from the time of Abba-Eel, the grandson of Yarim-Lim, who gave the city as a suzerainty to his brother, also called Yarim-Lim.¹⁸⁵⁷ The city of Alalakh actually serves as an example of both a sponsored kingdom of Yamhad and as its vassal, during different periods. The one royal inscription from Alalakh, the Idrimi Inscription,¹⁸⁵⁸ written on the base of a statue of King Idrimi dated to the 15th century BCE, does mention the sea (the king

¹⁸⁵⁷ Hamblin 2006, 264; Frayne 1990, 799.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Published by Oppenheim 1969, 557–558. Oppenheim observed parallels between Idrimi and David. The accession number of the statue on which the inscription is written is BM 130738.

records the arrival of his war-ships by the sea at Mt. Hazi, also known by the name Saphon). In the inscription itself, the king of Alalakh calls Aleppo “the house of my fathers”. The inscription also mentions the storm-god Teshub, which was the name by which the Storm-God of Aleppo was called by the Hittites, discussed previously. By calling himself the servant of Teshub, Idrimi makes reference to his ancestral home of Aleppo, which indicates that Teshub was connected to the Storm-God of Aleppo. But these mentions are not in the context of the Combat Myth *per se*.

What is evident from the inscription is that the Storm-God was also considered the patron deity of kingship in Alalakh. The god was considered especially important when the city aspired to a kingship of its own, probably modelling itself on the political customs and traditions of Yamhad. The royal house of Alalakh derived directly from the royal house of Yamhad, and King Niqmepa (a dynastic name found also in Ugarit) used the royal seal of his ancestor Abba-El of Aleppo, which contained the epithet ‘Beloved of Adad’.¹⁸⁵⁹ The epithet appears to have been used by the kings of Alalakh from then on, featuring in the many seal impressions on tablet envelopes of Ammi-Taqumma (E4.34.2), son of Yarim-Lim.¹⁸⁶⁰ The epithet ‘Beloved of Adad’ is also found on the seal of Mutiya (E4.27.4.2), who was the king of Shehna, a vassal of Yamhad. It is possible that Mutiya had a familial affiliation with the House of Yamhad, as most of the vassal kings bore the title ÌR/IR₁₁ ^dIškur (e.g. E4.23.10, Hammurapi of Hana, and Idrimi himself in BM 131493) instead of the epithet ‘Beloved’, which in itself may have indicated vassalage instead of sponsorship for the rulers of the city. A favoured king was called ‘Beloved of the Storm-God’, while a subject king was the Storm-God’s servant.

Idrimi’s story, as he relates it in his royal inscription written in Akkadian with NWS influence, bears similarity to the story of Zimri-Lim. Forced to flee Alalakh upon the murder of his father, he had to live first in Emar and then in the city of Ammi(y)a “in the land of Canaan” (l. 20, possibly a reference to Amyun in modern Lebanon) for seven years “among the Hapiru-people” (^{LÚ}SA.GAZ, l. 27) before returning to Alalakh to establish his kingdom and undertake a military

¹⁸⁵⁹ Collon 2005, 119.

¹⁸⁶⁰ It is unknown whether this was one of the Yarim-Lim’s from Aleppo or the one from Alalakh. Frayne 1990, 801.

campaign (l. 77–91).¹⁸⁶¹ It is interesting that Idmiri only seems to have become king by swearing fealty to a senior king, Barattarna (l. 51–58). Idrimi also claims that there were ‘people of Halab’ living in Ammi(y)a during this time (l. 20), which indicates an Aleppan presence in the cities of the Levantine littoral. Following the rise of the Mitanni Empire, Amorite tribes had banded together to form the kingdom of Amurru, situated in the area of modern-day Lebanon, south of Ugarit and Aleppo. The Aleppan ancestry of the people allowed Idrimi to muster troops from the region. The narrative of the inscription may correspond with history, but it is also employing a narrative *topos*. What is significant about the inscription is that it brings the Aleppan traditions in direct contact with the Levantine littoral in the 15th c. of the LBA, thus providing evidence of the dissemination of the Yamhadian political mythology and ideology from Aleppo to the polities of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Several texts from the Iron Age written in Phoenician and Aramaic dialects also witness to the continued importance of the Storm-God of Aleppo for the royal ideologies of the NWS kingdoms in the areas of the Eastern Mediterranean and Syria. While the Combat Myth as such is no longer explicitly mentioned in these texts, it is embedded in the legitimization of royal authority by the armed figure of the Storm-God. The Combat Myth is not referenced in the Phoenician inscriptions (published in KAI), but the texts and the iconography underline to the importance of the Storm-God by the Eastern Mediterranean continuing into the Iron Age. The ideological content of the divine weapons, granting the authority of the Storm-God to the reigning monarch, may be seen as continuing in the vegetal sceptres of the Phoenician kings, even though they were no longer understood as actual divine weapons at this time. Vestiges of the tradition also seem to have survived even into the Hellenistic era.

¹⁸⁶¹ Chavalas 2003, 210.

6.3.3 References to North West Semitic Mythological Concepts in Later Hellenistic Writings

There are possible later references to the Combat Myth in Hellenistic writings from the area of the Eastern Mediterranean. A number of Greek and Roman texts bearing on the goddess Aphrodite have been connected with ANE antecedents,¹⁸⁶² the most prominent among them the myth of Aphrodite and the shepherd Anchises,¹⁸⁶³ as well as a number of shorter mythological excerpts. Astarte or Ishtar has been proposed as the origin of Aphrodite.¹⁸⁶⁴ It is in mythological excerpts featuring the goddess that we find the most fruitful field for comparisons when it comes to the NWS myths of divine combat. These texts, it is important to stress, are both temporally and geographically closer to Biblical texts than the Mariote or Ugaritic witnesses. A connection between the NWS goddess Astarte and Aphrodite is by no means a new proposition, as it was first suggested by Herodotus in the 5th century BCE.¹⁸⁶⁵ Wyatt went so far as to connect the very name of Aphrodite to the name Astarte.¹⁸⁶⁶ Burkert advanced the hypothesis that Greek culture was influenced by the religions and literatures of the “Luwian-Aramaic-Phoenician sphere” to a significant degree during the “orientalizing period” of the first millennium BCE,¹⁸⁶⁷ which would make the texts comparable and analogous to the Biblical texts as retainers of the earlier traditions.

Walcot suggested that the final battle between Zeus and Typhoeus in Hesiod’s *Theogony* recalled the struggle between a god and “a kind of dragon” in the literatures of the ANE.¹⁸⁶⁸ This is further likened to Eastern Mediterranean traditions by the fact that according to Pseudo-Apollodorus, the final battle between Zeus and Typhon took place on Mount Hazzi of Northern Syria, often thought to correspond to Baal’s mountain, Saphon.¹⁸⁶⁹ The Pseudo-Apollodorus

¹⁸⁶² Penglase (1994, 162) described one of the goddess’ major characteristics as being androgyny, which is to say retaining both masculine and feminine aspects. He also pointed out that this is a characteristic which the goddess shared with Ishtar and Astarte. Indeed, such ambiguity seems to surround most Venus-goddesses.

¹⁸⁶³ Penglase 1994, 169.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Burkert 1985, 152–153.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Burkert 1985, 152–153. For a comprehensive study on the goddess Astarte, see Bonnet 1996.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Wyatt 1999, 109–114. Hommel 1883, 385, suggested that the name of Aphrodite resulted from the Phoenician Astoreth through metathesis, both ultimately deriving from *Ish-tar*. Also Boedeker 1974, 7, and Burkert 1985, 152–156; 1992, 98, on “western Semitic Ashtorith”.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Burkert 1992, 6.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Walcot 1956, 199–201.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Note that a connection between Typhon and the Hittite Illuyanka was made very soon after the discovery of the Hittite texts. Gilan 2013, 101 (and bibliography).

version of the Greek myth (*Bibliotheca* 1.41–1.44) has especially been connected to the Hittite-Hurrian traditions of the Combat Myth.¹⁸⁷⁰ It must be noted that Zeus, who is associated with Baal in Sanchuniathon's (σαγχουνιαθωνος) Phoenician History, also battles Typhon in Hesiod's *Theogony* (*Theo.* 836–868).¹⁸⁷¹ While the association of Typhon and Yamm is not uncontested, the narratives of Typhon from the Eastern Mediterranean do seem to share a certain affinity to the earlier mythology. The Sanchuniathon myth has been preserved through the translation of Philo of Byblos, surviving only in the quotations of Eusebius of Caesaria in his *Praeparatio evangelica* (1.9.21–1.10.).¹⁸⁷² The Phoenician Theogony has been dated to c. 500 BCE; it is probably, although not certainly, drawing on earlier material.¹⁸⁷³ But it is not the only survival of this mythology via Hellenistic authors.

The Roman poet Ovid, writing during the 1st centuries BCE and CE, related a story of Aphrodite and Typhon, the titan being associated with the NWS sea-deity Yamm in Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History. In Ovid's story, Typhon pursues Aphrodite/Dione, who flees to the Euphrates with her infant son, flings herself into the river, and is rescued from the monstrous creature by twin fish (*Fasti* 2, 458–474). In another one of Ovid's tales, all of the gods flee from a monstrous Typhoeus who pursues them to Egypt; Aphrodite disguises herself as a fish to hide from the monster, having reached the Nile delta (*Metamorphoses* 5, 315–334). The tradition was later associated with Lake Yammoune of Lebanon, witnessing to the tendency to attach myths to bodies of water in the area.¹⁸⁷⁴

Note also that Pope had located the abode of El in the same place.¹⁸⁷⁵ Pope was supported by Albright, who commented on his article by stating that Pope's most important contribution was identifying El's abode at the sources or springs of the (two) rivers and in the midst of the channels of the (two) deeps “with Afqā-Yammūneh in Lebanon, Afqā being the famous source of the Adonis River and

¹⁸⁷⁰ See Penglase 1994, 168; Abel 1933, 153.

¹⁸⁷¹ Walcot 1956, 199. The affinities between the Phoenician History, the Theogony, and Hittite-Hurrian mythology are long established. Campbell 2013, 29.

¹⁸⁷² Due to being quoted through two authors, Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History is extremely problematic as a source, but it is generally believed that at least some elements do represent genuine NWS conceptions of the 1st millennium BCE. On the dating of Sanchuniathon, see Albright 1938, 24; Eissfeldt 1966; 67–71.

¹⁸⁷³ Walcot 1956, 201–202.

¹⁸⁷⁴ At least according to Boulanger 1955, 170. He further suggests that Adonis and Typhon were brothers in this narrative. If one is inclined to find a seasonal pattern in the geography, he writes: “The only outflow of this lake is a big hole and the lake dries up completely towards the end of the summer”.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Pope 1955, 61.

Yammûneh an intermittent lake on the other side of the mountain, which is associated closely with it by legend”.¹⁸⁷⁶ Adonis was in the Hellenistic era associated with Baal. Drummond recorded a local myth in the late 19th century, according to which the water of the Adonis River was believed to be tinted red annually to commemorate the season “when the festival was celebrated in his honour”. Drummond did not associate Adonis not with Baal, however, but with the sun (and the sun with “Thammuz”).¹⁸⁷⁷

El’s abode may indeed have been thought to reside at Afqa, or where the Barada River splits into separate streams by the city of Damascus, as well as many other places where one course of water joined another – or even at Mount Saphon where the Storm-God dwelled – also existing in symbolic geography, all at the same time.¹⁸⁷⁸ Likewise, St. George may have been the one to overcome the dragon of the Beyrout River or the Magoras in the later popular tradition of the area, persisting in local legends up until the late 19th century, with the local inhabitants believing that red marks on the stones represented the dragon’s actual blood.¹⁸⁷⁹ For the native inhabitants, each one of these places was the one and true theatre of the mythic battle, where it had actually taken place in the historical past of their ancestors. The local variations of the myth are a natural consequence of it being employed as a foundational myth (*Basis Mythos*) in these ancient Semitic kingdoms, insular and ‘international’ as they were at the same time.¹⁸⁸⁰

Typhon, the dragon, the serpent, and the Orontes River are all named the same by Malalas in *Chronographia* 8.10, and this may well be the first recorded

¹⁸⁷⁶ Albright 1956, 255.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Drummond 1826, 122ff.

¹⁸⁷⁸ The homes of the gods existing in “terrestrial and celestial” spheres simultaneously was also discussed by Albright 1956, 255–256. He writes, “It must always be remembered that mythical geography and cosmology are thoroughly ambivalent, belonging to the stage of protological thinking and therefore not to be interpreted even by empirical logic”. It is true that one interpretation does not preclude others, as people are capable of holding seemingly contradicting notions simultaneously. See Frankfort (1948, 19–20) for the concept of the ‘multiplicity of answers’ in the ancient world.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Marmont 1854, 221.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Strabo himself has trouble locating the origin of the myth of Typhon, which he still seems to believe was of Aramean origin (following Homer’s *Iliad* 2.783, according to which “the couch of Typhon” was with the Arameans; while he sometimes writes of the Arimi as an Anatolian people, he also writes: “But some understand that the Syrians are Arimi, who are now called the Arimaean, and that the Cilicians in Troy, forced to migrate, settled again in Syria and cut off for themselves from Syria what is now called Cilicia”. He writes on the terminological confusion himself at 16.4.27, coming to the conclusion that Arimi should not be used of a place in Syria or Cilicia, but should refer to “Syria itself”). In *Geography* (13.4.6.) he writes that the place where the Arameans live is “woody and subject to strokes of lightning”, connecting this to the myth of Typhon (“but it was father Zeus that once amongst the Arimi, by necessity, alone of the gods, smote monstrous Typhon of the fifty heads”). According to him some have located the myth in Cilicia, others in Syria or the Pithecussae Islands, and others still to Etna in Sicily.

textual conflation of the epithets of the characters of the Combat Myth and an actual river. The context of the passage itself is not mythological, but based on historical geography, concerning the division of Alexander's Empire. According to Abel, all of these Hellenistic Typhon traditions (the foremost among them in *Theog.* 820–822) belie a Syrian origin, perhaps offering support to the hypothesis of the names of the monsters as bodies of water or other natural formations. Abel was also among the first to connect the Typhon traditions not only to the Ugaritic texts but to the Biblical monsters (chiefly Is. 27:1 and Ps. 74:14).¹⁸⁸¹

A Roman mythographer of the 2nd century CE, Pseudo-Hyginus, related a story in which Venus and her son came to the Euphrates in Syria where, out of fear of Typhon, she threw herself and her son into the river. In the river she and her son became fish and were apparently thought to have continued living as fish ever since (*Astronomica* 2, 30). Diodoros Siculus (2.4.2), writing in the 1st century, quoted a similar but older story from Ctesias of Cnidus from the 5th century BCE, wherein the Philistine goddess Derceto attempts to drown herself in a lake near Ashkelon after bearing a child to a young man, but she is transformed into a creature that is half fish and half woman instead. Pseudo-Hyginus related another tale of the birth of Venus, wherein an egg had fallen into the river Euphrates and upon hatching gave birth to the goddess, who was later called the Syrian goddess (*Fabulae* 197). His tale also brings to mind the Greek tale of the birth of Aphrodite, born out of the foam of the sea after having been fertilized by the severed manhood of Uranus (ὠρᾶνος),¹⁸⁸² which his son Cronus (κρονος) had cast into the sea, as related by Hesiod in his Theogony (*Theo.* 188–200), dated to the 5th century BCE.¹⁸⁸³

Astarte was likewise the daughter of Uranus in Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History, where Uranus was likened unto the NWS sea-god Yamm. Even though Sale denied that Urania or Ourania was a title of Aphrodite's – at least in early poetry¹⁸⁸⁴ – the epithet Aphrodite Ourania is known from Herodotus (1.103) and Pausanias (1.14.7), both of whom asserted an Eastern origin for the

¹⁸⁸¹ Abel 1933, 153–154.

¹⁸⁸² The Greek word ὠρᾶνος had the meaning of both sea foam and semen. Sale 1961, 514.

¹⁸⁸³ Whether these lines are a part of Hesiod's original Theogony has been called into question. It is possible that Hesiod used material he had gathered from different sources, and in this instance, from a Cyprian cult myth. Sanchuniathon's Phoenician History has been considered one of Hesiod's remote sources. The origin of the castration narrative, on the other hand, has been traced to a Hurrian Kumarbi-myth preserved in Hittite. See discussion in Sale 1961, 508–509, 514, 520; Walcot 1956.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Sale 1961, 513.

goddess. The muse Urania (“heavenly”), whether associated with Aphrodite or not, was considered to be the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys¹⁸⁸⁵ – respectively the world-encircling ocean called “the origin of the gods” and the great sea titaness, whose name has been connected to the Mesopotamian monstrous Tiamat both semantically (Burkert called the shift from Akkadian *taw(a)tu* to Ionian *tethys* an “exact transcription”) and narratively. According to Burkert, there can be no question of Bronze Age borrowing from Akkadian sources in the Greek texts when it comes to the case of Tethys and Tiamat, which is probably correct, as the character of Tiamat is largely a product of the Iron Age.¹⁸⁸⁶

There is also a connection between Tiamat and Aphrodite Ourania (or *Vénus Uranie* in Seyrig’s words, whom he associated with the Baalat of Byblos) or the Hermopolitan Venus, who is seated on a throne on the sea.¹⁸⁸⁷ Albright mentioned another Phoenician goddess who is also seated on a throne on the sea (*ina kussî tâmtim*), connecting the idea of the goddess seated on a throne both with the Egyptian Astarte Papyrus and the passage of Ez. 28:2;¹⁸⁸⁸ this also recalls the Hittite traditions discussed previously. Wyatt, on the other hand, made a connection between Oceanus (Ὠκεανός) and Yamm, and also likened the god Nahar of Ugaritic myth to the world-encircling river,¹⁸⁸⁹ with little support from the Ugaritic texts.

While it is unclear what Aphrodite’s – or indeed Astarte’s – relationship with the sea was, it seems undeniable that the goddess was unequivocally associated with the sea and the myth in one fashion or another. Sale writes:

Whether it was Hesiod or a predecessor who made Aphrodite rise from the waves for the first time seems to me an unanswerable question, though, if it was Hesiod, it was obviously not because he wanted to explain Aphrodite’s role as a sea-goddess.¹⁸⁹⁰

If Aphrodite and Astarte truly sprang from a shared origin, then the question of whether Hesiod was the first to make the goddess rise from the waves seems to have been sufficiently answered in the form of the Egyptian Astarte-Papyrus dating to the LBA, which features a scene between the goddess and the sea which has been interpreted as erotic (cf. section 6.5). The idea that Sale put forward is that Aphrodite (or Astarte) was not a sea-goddess as such, but instead was a

¹⁸⁸⁵ Sale 1961, 513.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Burkert 1992, 91–93.

¹⁸⁸⁷ Seyrig 1929, 329.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Albright 1932, 194.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Wyatt 2002, 79; 2003, 148. He described both Yamm and Oceanus as Ouroborian serpentine earth-surrounders, likening them to dragons who guard their treasures. While the proposal is interesting, the textual support for it is modest.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Sale 1961, 519.

goddess with an intimate and yet inexplicable connection to the sea.¹⁸⁹¹

Following the classical author Pausanias (1.14.7), Penglase connected the name Syria with the Phoenician city of Ascalon.¹⁸⁹² However, it is likely that in these instances it is the city of Tyre (*Šūr*) which was meant by the word ‘Syria’, the broader area having been named after the city due to Hadrian’s favouring of it. Tyre was located on the coast of modern-day Lebanon, and in later times the name of the city came to designate the area of the entire Levant. The city of Tyre was situated on an island (“in the heart of the sea”; Ez. 28:2) in Antiquity, before Alexander the Great connected the island to the coast via a land isthmus; therefore, the strong association between Astarte and Tyre may be the reason behind the goddess’ maritime connection.¹⁸⁹³ It may also indicate that Tyre was one of the oldest cult centres for the goddess, even though the Phoenician inscriptions (e.g. KAI 13, 14) show a clearer connection between Astarte and Sidon, which was also called ŠDN ‘RŠ YM, ‘Sidon, the land of the sea’.¹⁸⁹⁴ Lipinski translated it “(Land)-by-the-Sea”.¹⁸⁹⁵ Both translations are intuitively comprehensible, considering the city’s location.

Thus far, no one has suggested the translation “Land of Yamm” for ‘RŠ YM, but it might be considered in light of the later cult of Poseidon in the neighbouring city of Berytus (in the Hellenistic era, the god Poseidon seems to have assumed the role of the chief divinity of Beirut, akin to Melqart-Heracles, the patron deity of Tyre),¹⁸⁹⁶ which Taylor connected to Sidon with the name of Poseidon (“po-seida-aun”), on the basis of the Sidonian inscription KAI 14:15, 16.¹⁸⁹⁷ Jidejian related an aetiological myth from Beirut, according to which the city had been named after the nymph Beroë, daughter of Aphrodite, lusted after by the patron divinity of Beirut, the sea-god Poseidon, who contested for the goddess with Dionysus, “symbol of the land”. This myth was commemorated on coinage from the Hellenistic era.¹⁸⁹⁸ Dionysius was one of the more complex Hellenistic divinities, but in this context it must suffice to highlight that Dionysius has been

¹⁸⁹¹ Gray (1949, 73), on the other hand, believed that the reverence of Ashtart and Ashtar as morning and evening star originated in the desert.

¹⁸⁹² Penglase 1994, 161.

¹⁸⁹³ Jidejian 1992, 124, 172. Cross (1973, 31) suggested that the Elat of Tyre depicted on Tyrian coins was probably Asherah.

¹⁸⁹⁴ The connection between the goddess and the city of Sidon is already indicated in the title *bēltu ša gubla* (compare with the later Phoenician *b’lt gbl*) found in the Amarna texts (EA 68:4).

¹⁸⁹⁵ Lipinski 2004, 294.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Jidejian 1992, 58.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Taylor 1832, 506.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Jidejian 1992, 58.

etymologically connected with the god Zeus (i.e. the Indo-Aryan thunder-god) and seen as representing a type of the ‘dying and rising god’, a role in which Baal has also been frequently cast.¹⁸⁹⁹ In analogue to the other cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, deriving the origins of the myth from older local Berytian traditions is not implausible.

While the narrative in the Beirut aetiology is reminiscent of the Astarte-Papyrus (which I discuss in section 6.5), it deserves attention in that, unlike in all other variations of the myth, in the myth from the city of Beirut the sea-god wins: “Beroë thus became the possession of the sea-god, a reflection of the city’s geographical and maritime importance in the ancient world”.¹⁹⁰⁰ Also interesting in this regard is the name of the city itself. Stieglitz discussed the derivation of the name from *be’erot* with the meaning of ‘fountains’. A bilingual from Ebla (MEE 4:336 #1343’) makes the connection between AB.A, *tì-’à-ma-tum* and *bu-la-tum* (Eblaite form of *bu’râtum*), offering *bu’râtum* as the Eblaite equivalent for the Sumerian and Akkadian words for ‘sea’, most likely indicating the Mediterranean Sea. According to Stieglitz, the name “originally designated the ‘primeval sea’, and was a synonym of Tiâmat”. The Ebla text dates from the 25th century BCE, which indicates that there may have been an ancient connection between the city of Beirut and the divinized Mediterranean.¹⁹⁰¹ While this is speculation, it could be that Beirut was the ancient cult centre for the sea and the sea-god in the area.

The connection between Sidon and Yamm, on the other hand, may also be suggested by Strabo, who in *Geography* (16.2.12) mentions three cities on the coast of Laodiceia: Poseidium, Heracleium and Gabala. Out of these three, Heracleium may be associated with Tyre and Gabala with Byblos, suggesting that Sidon was meant by Poseidium. Perhaps there was some kind of connection between the city of Sidon and the god of the sea, which also eased the later Hellenistic association between the city and Poseidon. But Poseidon was known throughout the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Nonnus, a Greek author writing in the 5th century CE, related the story of Dionysus’ battle against the sea-god Poseidon on the island of Tyre. The reason for the battle here was also Beroë, in this myth a mortal woman pursued by both gods (*Dionysiaca* 43). Eissfeldt drew a connection between the story of Nonnus and Sanchuniathon’s Phoenician

¹⁸⁹⁹ See Stephens 2003, 84–85; Mettinger 2001, 55ff.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Jidejian 1992, 58.

¹⁹⁰¹ Stieglitz 1990, 88.

History, arguing for a Phoenician origin of the narrative, which he interpreted as the battle between the heaven and the sea.¹⁹⁰² But it is not solely the Hellenistic narratives that connect the Eastern Mediterranean coastal cities to the Combat Myth. In the Amarna texts (EA 147), King Abimilku of Tyre, calls the Pharaoh (either Akhenaten or his father, Amenhotep III) the one “who establishes the entire land in peace by the power of *his arm*, and who utters *his voice* in heaven like Addu, so that the whole land trembles at his voice”. The Tyrian king is appearing to compliment the Pharaoh by casting him in the role of the Storm-God, suggesting that the myth was familiar to him, and in political use in diplomatic correspondence.

Strabo writes in *Geography* (16.2.28) that further south on the Levantine coast in the city of Joppa (modern Jaffa/Yafo), it was Andromeda who was “was exposed to the sea-monster; for the place is situated at a rather high elevation [...] so high, it is said, that Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Judaeans, is visible from it; and indeed the Judaeans have used this place as a seaport when they have gone down as far as the sea”. He does not elaborate on how the myth and the use of the port by the Jerusalemites are connected. The myth of Andromeda and the sea-beast Cetus was also connected to the city of Jaffa by Josephus (*De bell. jud.* 3.9.3) and Pausanias (*Hellados periegesis* 4.35.9). Redford further recounted tales from the cities of Aphek and Gaza, all dating to the Hellenistic period, and he connected these stories with the Egyptian Astarte-Papyrus.¹⁹⁰³

Further on to the south, the city of Ascalon (Ashkelon) was the site of the battle between St. George and the dragon in the popular legend of the early medieval period. St. Georgius of Lydda (Biblical גִּלְיָד) was a Christian martyr under Diocletian in the 3rd century CE, so while the main source for the legend is in medieval romances (the most famous is undoubtedly the 13th-century ‘The Golden Legend’ (*Legenda sanctorum/aurea*) by the Genoan Jacobus de Voragine, it likely had earlier precedents.¹⁹⁰⁴ Here, St. George finds the daughter of the king weeping on the shore of the sea, to be delivered as tribute to the dragon that lived in a lake or a pool (“a stagne or a pond lyke a see”) by the city in “the provynce of Lybya to a cyte whyche is sayd Sylene”; after defeating the dragon he binds its neck with the girdle of the daughter of the king, who then leads the bound dragon

¹⁹⁰² Eissfeldt 1966, 64.

¹⁹⁰³ Redford 1992, 45–46.

¹⁹⁰⁴ The account is related by Joseph Pote in *Les Delices de Windsore; or, a Pocket companion to Windsor Castle* (etc.) [Eton: 1771].

into the city to be slain and its corpse thrown to the fields. The origins of the medieval legends are thought to be in the late 5th century, but clearly the story had a longer pre-history, one which may well predate the life and times of the Eastern Mediterranean martyr. The historicity of the person of St. George was questioned from early on.¹⁹⁰⁵

What is remarkable about the aforementioned Greco-Roman tales from around the 1st century is that they all seem to connect the goddess Aphrodite with the area of Syria, and even specifically with the Euphrates, reaffirming the (at least perceived) Syrian origin of the Cyprian goddess. Budin argued that only the Cyprian Aphrodite had an affinity with Astarte, and that in mainland Greece the syncretism of the goddesses was caused by the Greek tendency to see all Eastern goddesses as interchangeable. There certainly seems to be a strong association of the Cyprian goddess to Syria, and most of the texts I have examined bear on the Cyprian goddess.¹⁹⁰⁶ The stories which feature the goddess and the sea seem to have served as aetiologies that explain the custom of certain Syrians not eating fish in Antiquity, which may or may not have had a historical precedent. Athenaeus (8.37) gives an etymology of Atargatis, connecting the name of the goddess with a queen called Gatis, who forbade the eating of fish. These stories may have also been fashioned – and, in my opinion, this is more likely – to explain the connection of the goddess to the sea in cult.¹⁹⁰⁷ But there are some striking similarities between the Aphrodite of these stories and the goddess Astarte, *Dea Syria*. Sanchuniathon's Astarte is actually explicitly called Aphrodite by Philo of Byblos.

Sale also discussed the androgynous or bisexual Aphrodite (*Venus barbata*, the bearded Venus) of Cyprian cult which predated Hesiod. He remarked that bigendered deities are born out of cult practices (e.g. cultic transvestitism, where followers assume the form of the deity by dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex). He also briefly mentioned the Eastern origin of Aphrodite, referring to the possibility that the Cyprian androgynous Aphrodite, later introduced to mainland Greece, was actually a form of the *Dea Syria*.¹⁹⁰⁸ But was it really the Mesopotamian Inanna or the East Semitic Ishtar that lent influence to the Hellenic

¹⁹⁰⁵ See e.g. S. Riches, *St. George: Hero, Martyr and Myth* [Sutton: 2000].

¹⁹⁰⁶ Budin 2004, 94–145.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Sale 1961, 513.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Sale 1961, 512, 515–519. He also mentioned a 7th-century BCE Corinthian terracotta figure found on Cyprus, which has been connected by Riis (1949, 69–90) to Syrian Astarte plaques.

Aphrodite, as Penglase seems so convinced?¹⁹⁰⁹ While Penglase may be correct in decrying the necessity of Phoenician influence for the goddess, the NWS Astarte's sphere of influence and history goes much further back than the Phoenician coastal cities of the Eastern Mediterranean Iron Age. Penglase, for instance, seems wholly unaware of the role of the goddess in the Ugaritic texts, which serve as a window or a keyhole into the popularity and influence of the goddess in the cultures of the NWS Bronze Age.¹⁹¹⁰

Sale also made a suggestive connection between Aphrodite's birth from the castration of Uranus and the castrated priests of the cult of the *Magna Mater* in Asia Minor.¹⁹¹¹ According to van Zijl, the goddess Astarte was first worshipped in Syria-Palestine, spreading from there to Egypt and Cyprus, amongst other places.¹⁹¹² It is interesting to note, in light of the Ashtarrat inscription of Mari that Mari and Cyprus (Alašia) as well as Crete (Kaptara) had a trade relationship in the MBA, which also likely implied cultural exchanges. According to Malamat, Ugarit and Byblos were the foremost among the trading partners of Mari, which may be an overstatement.¹⁹¹³ But a relationship between the locations existed nonetheless. The Mari text A.1270 also evidences the presence of Cretans in Ugarit at the time of Mari.¹⁹¹⁴

Stieglitz pointed out a binomial deity from Ebla called *'ttr-w- 'ttr*, which he saw as a male god (although he offers little evidence as to how he deduced that this was a male god while claiming that *'ttr* was "probably a goddess" at Ebla). He suggested that the name of Astarte was a combination of the names of the binomial god, with both male and female aspects seeming inherent to the divinity.¹⁹¹⁵ One further example that muddies the waters when it comes to the relationship of Yamm and Ashtart is the goddess *atrt šd* of Ugarit (e.g. in KTU 1.91:10), most likely translated as 'Ashtart of the mountain', *vis-à-vis* Yamm's

¹⁹⁰⁹ He also admitted the possibility that the goddess could have been influenced by Indo-European derivation, especially a dawn-goddess, albeit he is not entirely convinced by the suggestion. Penglase 1994, 163–164.

¹⁹¹⁰ Penglase 1994, 164. In the Ugaritic texts, the goddess is not featured as prominently as the goddesses Anat and Asherah, often appearing as a sort of alternate for the fierce, young Anat. It would seem reasonable to suggest that Aphrodite shared aspects of all the three major Semitic goddesses – if indeed not comprising a composite of a whole host of other 'Oriental' goddesses, a suggestion which Penglase himself seemed not too thrilled with.

¹⁹¹¹ Sale 1961, 515.

¹⁹¹² Van Zijl 1972, 16.

¹⁹¹³ Malamat 1998, 37.

¹⁹¹⁴ Malamat 1998, 34–36. "This passage testifies to the commercial activities between Mari and Crete carried out at Ugarit, the most significant trade emporium on the Syrian coast".

¹⁹¹⁵ Stieglitz 1990, 85.

association with the symbol of the mountain discussed previously. Ambiguity is a characteristic shared by the goddess and the sea; it must be remarked here that the latter was also seen sometimes as male and sometimes as female – and whose iconography on the Syrian area resembles that of Ishtar on the Mesopotamian area.¹⁹¹⁶ If Yamm was, as I have suggested, the master of both the heavenly sea as well as its earthly counterpart, then his connection with the Venus-goddess immediately becomes more comprehensible.

There is also some ambiguity in the relationship of Yamm and Asherah, sometimes described as a sea-goddess and called *rbt atrt ym* in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁹¹⁷ This apparent epithet of the goddess has been translated as “Lady Asherah of the Sea”, “Asherah who traverses on the back of the sea”,¹⁹¹⁸ and “Great Asherah of the sea”.¹⁹¹⁹ Margalit suggested the meaning ‘wife’ or ‘consort’ for the word *atrt*, while the Ugaritic roots *atr* and *ašr* usually signify walking or marching.¹⁹²⁰ I would suggest another interpretation for the epithet: the Akkadian word *rabātum* (e.g. in Codex Hammurapi § 144, 163) had the meaning of primary wife or first wife. Watson submitted that the Ugaritic *rbt* is cognate to the Akkadian *rabāt* with the meaning ‘pre-eminent’.¹⁹²¹ The meaning of ‘primary wife’ is surely derived from this. Watson pointed out that there is no equivalent to this meaning of pre-eminence in the Ugaritic texts.¹⁹²²

As an epithet it seems fitting to the mother of the gods, albeit the title ‘Headwife, Asherah of the Sea’ does not necessarily shed light on the relationship of the goddess to the sea. As *rabatum*, Asherah could have been the wife of Yamm, or she could have been the wife of El and connected to Yamm (or the sea) in some other fashion (e.g. as a daughter or mother).¹⁹²³ The interpretation of Asherah as Yamm’s mother could find some support in the fact that in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Gaea (Asherah) is mother to Typhon (*Theo.* 821). Furthermore, Hendel

¹⁹¹⁶ See E. D. Van Buren: *Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art* [1945]; Töyräänvuori, forthcoming.

¹⁹¹⁷ For a comprehensive assessment of the goddess, see Wiggins 1993 and 2007.

¹⁹¹⁸ See Watson 1993, 431–31; Curtis 1985, 83; Cross 1973; Loretz 1990, 177. This view was advanced in particular by Albright 1946, 77–78; 1968, 105–106. Contra De Moor 1974, 438, who holds that the Ugaritic word does not have the meaning of “striding” or “walking”, preferring instead the interpretation of “following”.

¹⁹¹⁹ De Moor 1971, 145, suggests that Asherah was the goddess of the calm sea as opposed to Yamm’s raging sea, and was the patroness of fishermen and sailors.

¹⁹²⁰ Margalit 1990, 62.

¹⁹²¹ Watson 1993, 433.

¹⁹²² However see Belnap (2011, 46), who described Athirat as “El’s primary wife”. See also Gordon 1988.

¹⁹²³ Even in modern Arab cultures, mothers are given an honorary epithet bearing the name of their first son (e.g. “Umm Kulthum”, Mother of Kulthum).

claimed that Asherah is also found with the epithet *dt bṯn* (lit. ‘of the serpent’ but often translated as “serpent lady”).¹⁹²⁴ This epithet seems to be based on Albright’s early reading of the Sinai inscriptions,¹⁹²⁵ and it is not found in the Ugaritic texts. Note also that Albright originally interpreted Asherah (*Aṯirat-yam*) as a sea-goddess and a friend of Yamm.¹⁹²⁶ It must be noted that ‘Friend’ is probably among the most neutral terms used for the goddess in this regard.

It is uncertain how much the Roman authors of the first century still differentiated between Asherah and Astarte. Kapelrud held that Asherah was generally considered to be El’s consort, corroborated by the “Birth of the Gracious Gods” story, wherein the goddess is also called El’s daughter. According to Kapelrud, Asherah is actually rarely referred to as El’s wife. Mostly it seems to be inferred from her title as the “creatix of the gods” (*qnyt ilm*) paralleling El as “creator of creatures” (*bny bnwt*), which could only be bestowed on the most important goddess of the pantheon, and *most likely* the wife of the chief god. If El and Asherah are in the same position in the top tier or echelon of the pantheon, according to Kapelrud the conclusion must then be that Asherah is El’s wife.¹⁹²⁷ But this may not follow. One must also consider Asherah’s position as the mother of “the seventy sons of Asherah”, understood broadly as meaning “all the gods”, and the famed impotence of the Father of Years, discussed previously. The relationship between El and Asherah remains elusive.

All this is to say that there is hardly a one-to-one correspondence between the mythologies of Ugarit and those found in later Hellenistic references to NWS mythologies. Even though the texts from the Hellenistic era may offer some insights into NWS myths and do witness to later developments in the tradition, the texts are still problematic as evidence. The sources are secondary and written by non-native historiographers. The most useful evidence that we find in the Hellenistic texts is that which accords with the other witnesses available to us, bearing in mind the question which should be at the forefront of all examinations of ancient texts, “Does it help explain things?” While the Hellenistic writings may help us paint a fuller picture of NWS mythology on the coast of the Eastern Mediterranean at the time of the writing of the HB texts, the most important witness that they provide is in regard to the continued use of this mythology.

¹⁹²⁴ Hendel 1999, 745.

¹⁹²⁵ Albright 1969, 19–22. Cf. texts 351, 353.

¹⁹²⁶ Albright 1932, 194; 1936, 18–19.

¹⁹²⁷ Kapelrud 1952, 75–76.

6.3.4 Summary and Discussion

While the Mariote and Ugaritic texts are doubtless the major witnesses to the NWS Combat Myth, there are references to and traces of the myth in other sources as well, both contemporary to the major witnesses and in texts which are much closer in age to the Biblical witnesses. The older texts from Emar and Alalakh are important regarding the formative period of the Combat Myth, as both were involved in the political system of the interconnected Amorite kingdoms in the Amorite kingdom period, either as vassals or sponsored kingdoms of Yamhad. Because the texts from Emar do not feature the Combat Myth, they may function as negative evidence regarding the use of the myth in political legitimization in all of the NWS polities. The texts from Alalakh, on the other hand, witness to the political system itself: the rulers of Alalakh were called ‘servants of Adad’ when they were in the position of vassal, but they used the title ‘Beloved of Adad’ when they were in the position of a sponsored kingdom, their dynastic line derived directly from Aleppo. The Idrimi inscription is also important, as it witnesses to the spread of Amorites and their political conceptions to the area of Palestine in the LBA.

The later witnesses from the Eastern Mediterranean, both in the Phoenician inscriptions and the narratives transmitted by Hellenistic and Roman historians, by and large contemporary to the Biblical texts, attest to the continued importance of the mythology in the cities of the Levantine littoral. While the continued use of the Combat Myth as a foundational myth in these kingdoms is implied more than explicated in the texts, they are still extremely important witnesses, as they offer us alternative developments of the mythological tradition which is both analogous and contemporary to the witness of the Biblical texts. They also seem to indicate the continued mythologization of the tradition and its removal from real-world cultic and ritual usage, even though the myth was still being used as a political foundational myth in the Hellenistic era.

The myth, fostered in the inland deserts, was adopted by the NWS kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean, which had by and large been in the Yamhadian sphere of interest during the Amorite kingdom period.¹⁹²⁸ The

¹⁹²⁸ Jacobsen (1968, 107) questioned why the Babylonians ought independently to have devised a myth between the thunderstorm and the sea, and he found it difficult to imagine that they should have made the myth central to their cosmogony, asserting that common sense locate

conquest of the sea took on a different meaning on the seaboard, and the mythology grew into an epic narrative known throughout the cities of the Levantine littoral, although in localized particular forms. The kings may no longer have needed the weapons housed in the temple of Aleppo to symbolically conquer the sea, but they still ruled as representatives of the Storm-God because in the mythical past he had accomplished this feat for them and on their behalf. Toward the end of the Bronze Age, when the kingdom of Yamhad had fallen into obscurity and the great empires were on the decline, during a time when the small city-states were drawing inwards, it was no longer the Storm-God of Aleppo that conquered the Sea on behalf of the kings; the myth was localized and attached to bodies of water in the vicinities of the petty kingdoms. Each king had his own Storm-God that conquered its own, local adversary.

While in the Eastern Mediterranean the tradition is found in a variety of localized myths, and increasingly removed from conscious political use, in the Mesopotamian area the myth seems to have been consciously crafted into the political programme of the rulers in their royal inscriptions. I discuss their witness subsequently, but first I must dedicate a chapter to examining the differences between the originally Amorite mythology and the Babylonian politicized creation myth, *Enūma eliš*.

6.4 The Sea and Monarchic Legitimation in Ancient Assyria and Babylonia

6.4.1 Thou Rulest the Raging of the Sea: Biblical Yam-Sūf and the Hybrid Babylonian Myth *Enūma eliš*

This chapter focuses on the Babylonian Combat Myth *Enūma eliš* (EE) and its use in royal legitimation, as well as its possible derivation, in part, from the NWS myth. This is mainly in the interest of highlighting the differences between the traditions.¹⁹²⁹ This chapter also contains discussion on how certain Biblical psalms that seem to reference the splitting of the sea may owe their influence more to this hybrid myth than to the NWS mythos familiar from the Ugaritic and Mariote

find the origin of the myth on the seaboard. I disagree. The myth of the conquest of the sea was not needed on the seaboard, which is why in order for the myth to survive in the area, it required *recontextualization*.

¹⁹²⁹ Smith (1994b, preface, 81–82, and 309ff.) contains a thorough comparison of the myths. While Smith saw a connection between the myths, I see no direct connection but a broadly common source.

texts. Furthermore, attention is paid to the Sumerian influences on the hybrid Babylonian myth and what separates it from the Amorite traditions. While the myth may have been used in a similar fashion by Mesopotamian monarchs, and that East Semitic tradition of the Combat Myth may indeed be reflected in some of the Biblical witnesses discussed here, the hybrid Combat Myth and its uses are not the main focus of my dissertation. For a recent edition of the text of *EE* with translation, transliteration, facsimiles, recension information, a wealth of related Mesopotamian texts, and discussion, Lambert's massive and extremely valuable *Babylonian Creation Myths* (2013) may be consulted.

This chapter also includes discussion on the role of the Biblical Moses as an 'anti-king', a character which exemplifies the ideal king and possesses the symbols of kingship while at the same time rejecting and subverting the trope. Comparing and contrasting the character of Moses to that of the idealized kingship of Sargon of Agade brings this subversion into sharp focus, and indeed using a Mesopotamian monarch (whether Sargon directly or one of the later kings that modelled their self-presentation on Sargon's precedent) as the basis of a narrative figure meant to function as a social commentary on the new Post-Exilic political situation is par for the course. The story of the Exodus is discussed here as an ideological narrative. I have also chosen to discuss the Biblical concept of the Yam-Sūf (יַם־סוּף, 'Reed Sea') with the Sumerian-Babylonian myths of divine combat, because it is the influence of the Sumerian narratives on the Babylonian *EE* that separates it from the NWS forms of the myth, and some of these influences may be seen in the Reed Sea narrative. Twenty-three occurrences of the term יַם־סוּף (*yam sūf*) can be found within the texts of the HB, for the most part in Exodus (10:19, 13:18, 15:4, 15:22, 23:31) and the Book of Psalms (106:7, 9, 22 and 136:13, 15).¹⁹³⁰

Wilson posited that it is possible to find interconnections between the Babylonian Exile ("the other major framing event in Judean socio-mnemonic discourse") and the Exodus on the level of metanarrative. He suggested that because the Exodus "comes first" in the presentation of Israel's story within the corpus of Judean literature, it must be the primary framing event. He further

¹⁹³⁰ The term is also used in Dt. 1:1, 1:40, 2:1, 11:4, Num. 14:25, 21:4, 33:10–11, Josh. 2:10, 4:24, 24:6, Jer. 49:21, Neh. 9:9, and 1 Kgs 9:26. Not all of the passages can be claimed to contain traditions of the Combat Myth, even if the myth was written into the traditions at some point in history. Cf. Josh. 24:6, where the motif is thoroughly historicized: "And I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea".

argued that while Judean scribes could have imagined the Exodus “in ways that recalled the exile”, it was the Exodus that was “primary in their narrational memories”. If one were to interpret the two narratives as framing events, however, it is unclear why one book-end should necessarily hold primacy rather than both being of equal weight. And this is to assume that there were two events instead of two separate narrative traditions connected to one event.¹⁹³¹ There was a possibly analogous development in Babylon, in the appeal of the Assyrian Sargonids to the figure of Nebuchadnezzar to push the contemporary ideological narrative back to events which had occurred centuries earlier. Nielsen suggested that tying current events to events both in the recent and the distant past was to introduce to them an element of the eternal.¹⁹³²

According to Edelman, by situating the Exilic narrative of the Exodus in Egypt, Yahweh could demonstrate his status as the one true god in a battle against the Pharaoh, who claimed to be a living god.¹⁹³³ Interpreting the function of Moses as the ‘anti-king’, as a subversion of the *topos* of kingship, it is the people of Israel who take up the mantle of king, elected by the monarchic divinity, and pass through the waters which Yahweh had subjugated for them, just like earlier NWS kings. This displays a kind of democratization of the tradition of the Combat Myth – a process also observed by Bonnet & Merlo in connection with the prophetic oracles in the Exilic and Post-Exilic times.¹⁹³⁴ The Exile as an ideological narrative has been studied recently by Berlin (2010).

The Babylonian narrative of *EE*, which has often been referred to as a “parallel” for the Ugaritic myth, is found spread across seven cuneiform tablets, containing over 1,100 lines of poetic text. It has been suggested that the actual occasion for the writing of *EE* was the returning of the statue of Marduk from Elam, being a propagandistic feat of the Assyrian overlords.¹⁹³⁵ The crafting of a new narrative for the occasion does not preclude the use of existing mythemes in the literary undertaking. Four of the seven tablets containing *EE* were discovered in 1872 from the library of Aššurbanipal II. The first translation of the tablets was by G. Smith in 1876 (published in 1878), while the most famous translation was made by L. W. King in 1902. Although all of the text fragments that are now

¹⁹³¹ Wilson 2014, 123.

¹⁹³² Nielsen 2012, 20.

¹⁹³³ Edelman 2012, 193.

¹⁹³⁴ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 86.

¹⁹³⁵ Lambert 1964, 6; Yingling 2011, 34.

considered to belong to the narrative had not yet been discovered by the time that he made his translation, it is still widely used.¹⁹³⁶ The text of the tablets was collated by Talon in SAACT 4, his edition containing the cuneiform and transliteration of the text, which also includes textual material thought to belong to the narrative missing from the earlier edition (namely text fragments discovered at Sultantepe and the Sippar library).¹⁹³⁷

There exists little consensus on the dating of the narrative, or indeed on whether the narrative itself predates the writing of the tablets. The original tablets themselves have been dated to 900–200 BCE, the oldest fragments being the ones discovered in Assur after King’s translation, published by E. R. F. Ebeling in 1919 (with preliminary translations in 1917). The dating and research history of the narrative have been discussed by Yingling (2011). Lambert discussed the dating of the Assur tablets, the oldest known recension of the story, which have been dated to the end of the Middle Assyrian period (c. 850 BCE) purely on palaeographic grounds, but which cannot be dated with any amount of certainty.¹⁹³⁸ Even if a pre-history of several centuries is posited for the text, which as a product of an ideological programme it may not have had, it is still several centuries younger than the Baal Cycle. No genetic connection between the two myths is established.

Ringgren suggested that the Babylonian *EE* may have borrowed the concept of divine combat from NWS mythology, as earlier Sumerian creation myths do not contain this motif.¹⁹³⁹ The narrative of *EE* may owe influence to Sumerian myths, which feature several scenes of divine combat. While myths of divine combat are not alien to Sumerian literature, they are not a feature of Sumerian *creation* myths.¹⁹⁴⁰ What differentiates the Sumerian myths from the NWS Combat Myth is that they do not feature the sea as a character. The sea had no special place in the Sumerian pantheon, not did it possess adversarial

¹⁹³⁶ Labat made a more complete edition of the tablets in 1935. Facsimile of the cuneiform was published by Lambert & Parker in 1966, and again by Lambert 2013. A more recent translation has been made by Stephanie Dalley in 1991, and Lambert himself in 2013.

¹⁹³⁷ A list of the known tablets can be found in Talon 2005a, xiii–xviii.

¹⁹³⁸ Lambert 2013, 3–4.

¹⁹³⁹ Ringgren 1990, 94.

¹⁹⁴⁰ Kramer 1944, 77, who published some of the first Sumerian myths of combat and was convinced of the Sumerian origin of the *EE*, could not connect any of his “original Sumerian tales involving the slaying of a dragon” with creation. He also claims that the dragon-slaying theme was an “important motif” in Sumerian mythology on the one hand, but on the other there were only three examples of the motif in the textual sources, two of which he published in that very volume.

characteristics.¹⁹⁴¹ Sumerian creation stories feature themes of division and separation, the splitting of oneness into twoness, the separation of the sky (AN) from the earth (KI) to form the cosmos (ANKI),¹⁹⁴² and the organization of things.¹⁹⁴³ The merging and joining of opposing forces within a deity may also be an aspect of Indo-Aryan mythology.¹⁹⁴⁴ The Sumerian cosmogony is in opposition to this conception. In fact, in Kramer's treatment of Sumerian origin stories, the goddess Nammu (whose name was written with the ideogram for 'sea') is called AMA.TU.AN.KI, the mother from which the sky and the earth came forth. According to him, the Sumerians thought that heaven and earth were "created products of the primeval sea", and it was "the air god Enlil" who separated the two.¹⁹⁴⁵ It is difficult not to see the effects of this conception on *EE*, be as it may that Tiamat is an adversarial force in it.¹⁹⁴⁶ But to assume that ancient mythologies fit neatly into categories is as dangerous as it is to assume that they were all one and the same.¹⁹⁴⁷

It is a conviction of the author that the Babylonian tale, while containing many points of affinity and similarity with the NWS Combat Myth, is a conflation of Semitic (Amorite and Akkadian) and native Sumerian influences. When and if

¹⁹⁴¹ Edzard 1993, 2.

¹⁹⁴² This is different from the ancient Egyptian conceptions, where the joining of pairs of divinities formed into triads.

¹⁹⁴³ See Kramer 1944, 30ff., esp. Plates VIII ("The Separation of Heaven and Earth") and IX ("Enlil Separates Heaven and Earth"), and more recently Westenholz 2010. According to Lambert 2013, 169, the earliest Sumerian witness to the separation of the sky from the earth is in UD.GAL.NUN orthography in Early Dynastic literary texts such as OIP 99 113 ii 7–9, 136 iii 2–3. Forcing essential distinctions between different cosmologies is an exercise surely as fraught by difficulties as is forcing similarities between them. Frankfort (1948, 20) correctly pointed out that in ancient Egypt, creation was not an intellectual problem. I do, however, take issue with Lambert's claims that apart from the *EE*, there is "no systematic treatment of cosmology in Sumero-Babylonian literature". The *EE* is surely not such a 'systematic treatment of cosmology' either, but a political myth written for the exaltation of the god of Babylon.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Campbell 2013, 27. Part of this conception was the integration of celestial and chthonic divinities.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Kramer 1944, 39–40. The tablet he based this on is TRS 10.36–37. For Kramer, the goddess Nammu seems to represent the first princip (or principle) of the Sumerian universe, from which all other things derive.

¹⁹⁴⁶ While the name of Tiamat (*ti-amat*, written with the logogram *ti*-GÉME) has been etymologically derived from the Akkadian word for sea, *tāmtu(m)* (see Jacobsen 1968, 105; Burkert 1992, 92), this does not preclude a word-play with the Sumerian words TI(L) ('live', 'complete', 'ancient') and AMA ('mother'). Kramer (1944, 77) in fact suggested that the fact that the names of the main characters of the *EE* were "in large part Sumerian" was one of the factors betraying the Sumerian origin of the epic.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Kramer's interpretation of the Sumerian origin stories must be taken with a grain of salt. His description of the birth and organization of the Sumerian universe in 1944, 40–41, 74–75, shows clear Hesiodic influence. This is understandable, since Greek mythology was seen as the measuring stick against which other mythologies were compared, at least until the publication of Burkert's *The Orientalizing Revolution* (1992).

the strands of influence are painstakingly and with great difficulty separated – if they can be separated at all, as is the question with most other products of Sumero-Babylonian culture – we may use this distinction to detect indigenously NWS influences in the Biblical texts. It bears pointing out, however, that Jacobsen, for instance, believed that the battle between Tiamat and Marduk bore more Amorite (“Amurrite”) than Babylonian influence.¹⁹⁴⁸ It may well be that the origin of the combat portions of the myth are Amorite and thus Semitic, but the idea of creation resulting from the division of a whole into two almost certainly reveals Sumerian influence on the myth.¹⁹⁴⁹

The idea of warring generations may also have Indo-Aryan origins (as discussed previously in connection with the Hittite-Hurrian mythology). The Sumero-Babylonian myth of *EE* certainly does bear on the topic of kingship; in the narrative Marduk, vested with many of the characteristics of a Storm-God, is awarded the kingship of the gods. It may also be that Babylonian kings did employ the myth of the battle in a ritual setting in the Babylonian spring festival, *Akītu*. The festival and the narrative are closely linked, yet no such festival is known from either Mari or Ugarit – nor indeed has the myth been textually connected with a festival of any kind in either location.

There are many superficial similarities between the narrative of *EE* and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle – which may have been paralleled a little too easily in the past – such as the galaxies of monsters defeated by Tiamat and Anat (which I have discussed previously). While the Sumero-Babylonian myth may have had limited (if indeed any) influence on the Ugaritic texts, there is a possibility that some allusions or references to the battle-myth tradition in the Biblical texts were influenced more by the Sumero-Babylonian version of the myth than directly by the NWS or Amorite one. One must also contend with the fact that the classic study by Lauha suggested that the motif of the splitting of the sea was a later development in the Biblical myth.¹⁹⁵⁰ While it may well be a later development in the Combat Myth tradition, the parting of the waters seems to be an integral part of the Exodus-narratives in the HB.¹⁹⁵¹

¹⁹⁴⁸ Jacobsen 1968, 104–108.

¹⁹⁴⁹ Töyräänvuori 2010.

¹⁹⁵⁰ A. Lauha, *Das Schilfmeermotiv im Alten Testament* (SVT 9: 1963), 32–46. He viewed Ex. 14, 15:21b, Dt. 11:4 and Josh. 2:10, 4:23, 24:6–7 as containing Pre-Exilic traditions of the myth, many of which have been seen as containing influences from the NWS traditions.

¹⁹⁵¹ The Exodus-narrative is the central foundational myth of the HB, and it is referenced in most of the books of the HB. See Edelman (2012, 166–167) for a listing of the passages of direct

The lens through which I wish to examine these texts pertaining to the Combat Myth is not as an investigation into the historicity of the Reed Sea narratives,¹⁹⁵² but as an evolving or adjusted social memory, which was discussed in the context of the Exodus by Edelman (2012), and the antimonarchic ideology through which this social memory was created.¹⁹⁵³ Wilson, who has also used the term “social memory” in connection with the Exodus, defined it as the symbolic and systemic process through which a community collectively experiences the *present* and imagines the *future* in terms of the *past*.¹⁹⁵⁴ According to Edelman, the past is remembered in patterns intermixed to create multiple levels of association.¹⁹⁵⁵ Furthermore, she argued that it was the collapse of native Judahite Yahwism, which she seems to date to the time of the Exile,¹⁹⁵⁶ which led to the altering of prior rituals and their supporting myth. She believed that the creators and maintainers of emergent Judaism attempted to ensure that their inherited rituals and myths were reshaped so as to evoke “associative memories” consistent with the new understanding of Yahweh and Israel within the new context of Empire.¹⁹⁵⁷ This supporting political myth was the myth of “the ritual battle leading to kingship and the establishment of order”, i.e. the Combat Myth.¹⁹⁵⁸

references to the story. The crossing of the sea is only one part of the narrative, of course, although one of the more central parts of the story.

¹⁹⁵² Questions related to the Exodus-narratives as historiography have been recently discussed by Na’aman 2011.

¹⁹⁵³ Edelman 2012, 190: “By creating a prominent schema (organized knowledge structure) with striking or intense features that was simultaneously distinctive due to its unusual features, the priests provided an effective means of negotiating and reinforcing social identity”. She further posited that participation in the ritual signals a public acceptance of the social schema where the public liturgical performance of the ritual creates “social solidarity”.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Wilson 2013, 124. Nielsen’s 2012 discussion on the performative continuation of collective memory in Mesopotamia is not dissimilar. See especially his description on p. 4 of “remembering as a dynamic phenomenon carried out collectively and repeatedly within society in order to address the demands of the present”.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Edelman 2014, 85.

¹⁹⁵⁶ She dated the formation of the commemorative pilgrimage to the time of Artaxerxes I, which is when the rebuilt temple became the centre for emerging Judaism and the imperial bureaucracy. Edelman 2012, 191–192.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Edelman 2012, 161: “The need for a commemorative national festival that provided a sense of common origin and membership in a community established and led directly by Yahweh and his Torah, without recourse to an intermediary human leader, be that a Davidade or an empire ruler, did not arise until the demise of the kingdom of Judah” (p. 191). The ideology of empire also affected the construction of Judahite narratives. Edelman (2009, 82, 92) described the Post-Exilic Yahweh as a supreme ruler for whom the “reigning king of the world empire” was designated as earthly vice-regent, and that through the visits of Judahite officials to the courts of their Assyrian and Babylonian overlords, a concept associated with the “main empire gods” Aššur and Marduk, was applied to Yahweh to make him their iconographic equivalent.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Edelman 2012, 162: “The older myth primarily consisted of the warrior god who is made king of heaven after killing a rival god and who establishes cosmic order, part of which involved creating human law and justice”. She seems to connect the myth to creation, although she admits that it was not “necessarily a Semitic invention” since there were “Sumerian versions of

Berge called the Combat Myth in the Exodus narrative a story of institution, legitimation, and identity-formation.¹⁹⁵⁹ Nielsen, however, made an important point that this identity could be transmitted textually only to the literate:

To influence popular perceptions of contemporary events, those in power could not utilize texts that purported to describe the past but instead had to turn to the city itself as a locus of memory. By tending the monumental structures in the traditional manner and performing the associated public ceremonies, rulers interacted with the populace in ways that appealed to shared elements of the collective memory and potentially used the past to shape understandings of the present.¹⁹⁶⁰

According to Nielsen, the attachment of collective memories to material culture such as monuments and inscriptions is critical to their creation, condensing the past into the consistent pattern of memory. It was through restoration projects and the returning of the statue of Marduk to Babylon that the Assyrian monarchs engaged with collective memory and were able to reshape popular conceptions of the past.¹⁹⁶¹ As the loss of the Jerusalem temple seems to have played a part in the formation of the mythology, the attachment of the memory to a physical body of water becomes essential to the formation of this pattern of collective memory. The idea of myths and mythic rites as legitimating acts is based on the classic article by P. Bourdieu, *Les rites comme actes d'institution* (1982).

The Biblical tradition of this myth was found by Edelman, particularly in the texts in connection with the monstrous beings Rahab, Lotan, Tannin, and Yamm, and in texts in which Yahweh was elevated “to the status of king of heaven by the divine assembly” (Pss. 89:6, 8, 82:1, 1 Kgs. 22, Job 15:8). The main features of the Hebrew myth are the defeating of the monster, attaining kingship, and enthronement on a mountain temple,¹⁹⁶² but it should be born in mind that while in the monarchic period these were all staples of kingship, in the antimonarchic narrative the symbols of kingship underwent subversion. Ben Zvi mentioned bodies of water as having a special role in creating social memories and water sources functioning as mnemonics for places or events, but his

a combat myth that lead to creation”. While the creation aspect of *EE* probably owes to Sumerian traditions and there are indeed Sumerian myths of combat, creation as such was not a feature of Sumerian myths of combat; while e.g. in “The Song of the Hoe” (BM 80170, also known as “The Creation of the Pickax”, which is probably the most famous of the Sumerian creation stories) Enlil creates the world by separating the sky from the earth, this is not described as a particularly violent act. For the most recent edition of the myth, see Lambert 2013, 170.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Berge 2014, 119.

¹⁹⁶⁰ Nielsen 2012, 6.

¹⁹⁶¹ Nielsen 2012, 5, 16.

¹⁹⁶² Edelman 2012, 164: “From there he established and oversaw the maintenance of cosmic order and human justice as part of the ordering of the universe”.

approach is concerned with the “social mindscape of the community”,¹⁹⁶³ whereas I suggest that the lists of natural formations themselves were used to transmit histories and mythic narratives only secondarily.

The newer version of this myth, which Edelman called a “predominant mythology of the Semitic ANE”, was featured in Exodus, forming the basis of the Exodus-narrative. It had required “two notable adaptations” due to the changing circumstances of the community: because of the erasure of the other divinities, Yahweh now had to fight the Pharaoh (a human claiming to be divine) instead of the personified Sea, and the emergence of the covenant tradition, in which Yahweh establishes a relationship with his people via a formal pact, caused by the loss of political independence and identity at the end of the Davidic dynasty. While I agree with the first stipulation, I am unsure of the second, since the end of the Davidic monarchy was hardly the end of monarchy in Jerusalem, and there are aspects of a formal pact in the monarchic ideology of the Pre-Exilic kings of Israel. The difference is that in the Post-Exilic texts, the treaty is no longer between the god and the king, but the god and the people, as ‘the people of Israel’ take on the role of the king, especially in the Reed Sea narrative.¹⁹⁶⁴ The concept of election which had its roots in the Amorite political system was retained, and only its object changed.

The mythic complex concerning the establishment of kingship in heaven that Edelman saw underlying the narrative of the Exodus is the same “Semitic tradition” as in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and *EE*. While her reading of the myths is somewhat affected by the traditional metanarratives,¹⁹⁶⁵ it does indeed seem that influence of both of these traditions may be detected in the traditions of the crossing of the Sea, although it is likely that the Babylonian material was woven into native NWS traditions rather than the texts containing any direct influence

¹⁹⁶³ Ben Zvi 2014, 12.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Note, however, that the pact, as Edelman described it, also has features of a Neo-Assyrian vassal treaty: “Yahweh serves as their lord and sovereign and reveals the principles of law and justice that are to govern social interactions and transactions” (p. 161).

¹⁹⁶⁵ She recounted the myth of the Baal Cycle on p. 163 and the myth of the *EE* on p. 164, oversimplifying and misrepresenting certain facets (e.g. presenting Baal and Anat as the children of Asherah, Baal reigning for only a part of the year) in order to make the myths accord with one another. Some of the problems with her interpretation of the myths (and she is not alone in this regard) may also be due to the aged and non-critical translations (King 1918; Speiser 1955; Gottlieb 1980) which she used. But while I may disagree with some of the minutiae of her presentation, I am in agreement with the hard core of her thesis of how this mythic material was *used* in the Exodus-narratives.

from ancient Ugarit.¹⁹⁶⁶ She suggested that this mythic complex was adapted to reflect the community's changed worldview with the advent of monotheism.¹⁹⁶⁷

Edelman made an important point in that this mythic complex can be expressed in a foundational and re-assertive form. While she defined these forms as two distinct outlines of the myth itself, I would rather define the forms as differences in how the myth itself was used: as a charter myth, the Combat Myth is foundational, and as a re-assertive form of the myth it is recalled in the repetitive rituals of the community. The myth itself, however, may remain the same.¹⁹⁶⁸ For Edelman, Gen. 1 represented the foundational form of the myth and Exodus its re-assertive form.¹⁹⁶⁹ I would suggest that these both represent the foundational form, the charter myth, while re-assertive forms of the myths can be found in the psalms that may have been in cultic use, the Song of the Sea in Exodus notwithstanding.

Furthermore, Edelman called the myth of the Exodus-narrative an "alternate form of the myth", based on the development in which the king of heaven has to manifest as a warrior, defeat human enemies, and "re-establish order".¹⁹⁷⁰ The designation of an 'alternate form' hardly seems warranted, as every retelling of the myth is surely an alternative form, regardless of what elements of the core myth are presented or abandoned and what elements are added. The king in heaven and the warrior may also not be as conceptually distinctive as Edelman seems to posit, because it was through battle that one became the king of the gods in NWS mythology, making the king of the gods a warrior by necessity. The warrior is not a role that the king of the gods takes on,

¹⁹⁶⁶ Edelman (2012, 163) herself stated a preference for referring to native Judahite traditions rather than borrowings from 'Canaanite' traditions.

¹⁹⁶⁷ Edelman 2012, 165.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Edelman (2012, 162) defined the foundational myth as the myth in which two gods battle for the kingship of the gods and the re-assertive myth as one in which "chaotic forces disrupt the established order and require the divine king to manifest again as a warrior, defeat his human or divine enemies, and re-establish order". Further on p. 163, she writes: "The Ba'al cycle exemplifies the foundational form of the myth; it recounts the successful contest of the storm god to occupy the throne of the gods, dislodging Yam, the god of the sea. After his triumph, he is affirmed by the assembly of the gods as their champion, which gives him the right to rule the cosmos". The first of these accords with the core Amorite myth, while the second seems like the Gunkelian metanarrative of the Biblical traditions.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Edelman 2012, 165. She saw Zech. 14 as a further development of the re-assertive form of the myth, and Is. 13:6, 9, Jo. 1:15, 2:1, 11, 3:14, and Am. 5:18, 20 as its "ironic application". While irony is a literary technique originally found in Greek tragedies, I would venture that there is a sense of irony and subversion already in the Exodus-narratives, and perhaps even in the *EE* itself, or at the very least in the Assyrian commentaries on it (discussed in the section on the Ordeal).

¹⁹⁷⁰ Edelman 2012, 165.

but rather it is a warrior that ultimately becomes the king of the gods through his martial prowess. The king of the gods can only be a warrior-king, and defeating the human enemies of the human king is a concept we already find in some of the oldest iterations of this myth.

But for Edelman, it is specifically this alternate adapted version of the myth which became the central “foundational memory” of the religious community of Israel.¹⁹⁷¹ This social memory was subsequently given ritually embodied form as it was commemorated in the annual pilgrimage festivals of *pesah-massot*.¹⁹⁷² Edelman is building here on the ideas of Wyatt, according to whom the pilgrimage festival system, as well as other symbolic practices of the Iron Age, had been given new prominence in the Post-Exilic situation as a way of asserting continuity with the past while, at the same time, adjusting the community’s new identity brought on by the crisis of the Exile. These old practices became new symbols of the Exile as a means of reinforcing new group identity.¹⁹⁷³ I would add that the ideological content associated with the old practices was likewise modified for the new situation of the community that eventually assembled the texts of the HB. These festivals replaced the “former, monarchic era New Year’s festival celebration, where the role of the king as the earthly vice-regent was to be forgotten while Yahweh’s kingship was to be highlighted as he played the role of the hero-savior who defeated the conspiratorial enemy, pharaoh”.¹⁹⁷⁴

Edelman’s insistence on connecting the mythic complex with the agricultural cycle may come from the centrality of the festivals to her thesis. Her conclusion that the festivals were used to integrate this new narrative into the ritual life of the community seems plausible, and indeed the myth may have been in calendric ritual use in other NWS societies as well. But the myth itself has no *inherent* connection with the agroclimatic year, as it is not an aetiological myth but a myth of power. Batto may be correct in submitting that the conscious adaptation of the mythic tradition in the interest of theological and political agendas by the HB composers must be reckoned with,¹⁹⁷⁵ but the degree of the intentionality of the use of the mythic traditions in compositions is extremely

¹⁹⁷¹ Edelman 2012, 166.

¹⁹⁷² Edelman 2012, 170.

¹⁹⁷³ Wyatt 2005[1990], 55–71.

¹⁹⁷⁴ Edelman 2012, 192.

¹⁹⁷⁵ Batto 2013, 230.

difficult to determine. It is possible that mythic traditions were included in political programmes without conscious adoption or adaptation or any degree of intentional reference to the myths, because they were a feature of the intellectual heritage of the writers of the HB texts – or indeed their authors.

Translated variously as either the Reed Sea or the Red Sea, no consensus has been reached in Biblical scholarship on the actual meaning of the term, closely associated with the theme of the Exodus from Egypt. In recent years its definition has been increasingly called into question.¹⁹⁷⁶ Most often it has been understood as referring to a geographically definable location – either to the Red Sea or to some other body of water in the broad area between Egypt and the Levant. It is through this body of water that Moses is believed to have led the people of Israel to safety, away from the pursuing armies of the Egyptian Pharaoh. The character of the Pharaoh has been seen as a representation of the same primeval enemy of Yahweh, which in the narrative is also symbolized by the sea. Edelman viewed this as a further development in the reworking of the mythic tradition.¹⁹⁷⁷ But the exact location of this “sea of crossing” is not known to modern readers, and the historical basis of the narrative has been questioned for nearly a century.¹⁹⁷⁸ According to Hoffmeier, for example, there is no Biblical or Egyptological data that would allow for conclusions on its location.¹⁹⁷⁹

The Book of Jeremiah may contain vestiges of the hybrid Babylonian myth. Jer. 49:21¹⁹⁸⁰ refers to the Sea of Sūf, and there the Exodus tradition is combined with the theophany of the Storm-God, with quaking and noise recalling the sound of thunder. Babylon is mentioned in v. 51:42,¹⁹⁸¹ and it is possible that the verse features one of the few passages in which Egypt and Babylon are explicitly associated in the context of the waters uprising above them. Jer. 51:36–

¹⁹⁷⁶ Wyatt 2005, 38.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Edelman 2012, 169; Kloos (1986, 146) writes: “the idea that both Egypt and the Reed Sea represented Yhwh’s primeval enemy at the same time, is difficult to grasp. I do not think it can have been easy to grasp for the Hebrews either”. This objection assumes that all levels of the narrative were readily apparent for all of the recipients, whereas as a product of an ideological programme during or after the Exile (at least in its final form) the narrative was probably intended to work on several levels at the same time.

¹⁹⁷⁸ Mowinckel 1922, 78, was convinced that there was a historical truth behind the narrative and it was based on some real event at the sea. I agree that there seems to have been a kernel of historical truth in the narrative, but the conquests of the OB rulers were probably not what Mowinckel had in mind. He was concerned with the historicity of the Biblical narrative.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Ottosson 1974, 193; Dozeman 1996, 407; Segert 1994, 201; Huddleston 1992, 633; Hoffmeier 1999, 210.

¹⁹⁸⁰ “The earth has quaked at the noise of their downfall. There is an outcry! The noise of it has been heard at *the Red Sea*”.

¹⁹⁸¹ “*The sea* has come up over Babylon; she has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves”.

44 has been read in the context of the Combat Myth since the days of Gunkel,¹⁹⁸² and in this passage the influence of *EE* may be preferred to NWS traditions. Not only is the name of Babylon mentioned twice, but the passage seems to list many of the monsters of Tiamat's entourage:

Therefore this is what Yahweh says: "See, I will defend your cause and avenge you; ***I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.*** Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of *jackals*, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no one lives. Her people all roar like *young lions*, they growl like lion cubs. But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter, then sleep forever and not awake," declares Yahweh. "I will bring them down like *lambs* to the slaughter, like *rams* and *goats*. How Sheshak will be captured, the boast of the whole earth seized! How desolate Babylon will be among the nations! ***The sea will rise over Babylon; its roaring waves will cover her.*** Her towns will be desolate, a dry and desert land, a land where no one lives, through which no one travels. I will punish Bel in Babylon and make him spew out what he has swallowed. The nations will no longer stream to him. And the wall of Babylon will fall".

The passage is an oracle, beginning with the prophetic formula "Thus says Yahweh". The oracle is framed on both sides with the mention of the sea. The oracle seems to have been written during the Exile, and one can observe that the splitting of the sea is not yet a feature of the narrative. But the mention of Bel, the sea, and the monsters of Tiamat shows that the myth meant to elevate the god of Babylon was already being subverted for the use of the oppressed. V. 55 may have followed the passage through motif attraction: "Yahweh will destroy Babylon; he will silence her noisy din. Waves of enemies will rage like Great Waters; the roar of their voices will resound". This again recalls *EE*, in which the din of the people disturbs the sleeping Tiamat. In the verse, the waters and the hostile nations are associated.¹⁹⁸³

According to Edelman, this passage contains an allusion to the Exodus-narrative in the context of an "anticipated return from Assyria and the land of Egypt of the scattered members of Israel".¹⁹⁸⁴ Assyria and Egypt are certainly explicitly mentioned as the hostile nations, paralleled here with the sea and the river, but implicitly the verses probably refer to Babylon. Narratively speaking, Jeremiah was prophesizing the end of Babylon to come about through sinking into the water (and perhaps even referencing sympathetic magic of some sort) in vv. 63–64, "And when you have finished reading this book, bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates and say: 'Thus shall Babylon sink and not rise again!'". In a similar context in the Prophetic books, the sea is also mentioned

¹⁹⁸² Gunkel 2006, 53–57.

¹⁹⁸³ The animals listed in the text may also reference nations, akin to CT 22 pl. 48.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Edelman 2012, 169.

twice in Neh. 9:9, 11¹⁹⁸⁵ and twice more in Zech. 10:11,¹⁹⁸⁶ which would likewise seem to draw from the Exodus traditions.

Among the specific details of the foundational myth that Edelman listed are the strong hand and the outstretched arm of Yahweh, which contain the idea of military undertakings.¹⁹⁸⁷ I have previously discussed the possible interpretation of the hand as representing the divine weapon. She listed the texts which feature the motif in connection with the Exodus as Dt. 4:34, 37, 5:15, 26:8 (strong/mighty arm), Dt. 4:34, 2 Kgs. 17:36, Jer. 32:21 (outstretched arm), Dt. 9:26, 26:8, Jer. 32:21, and Dan. 9:15 (mighty hand), and she also adds the mention of the “mighty power” in 2 Kgs. 17:36 to the list. The Exodus-narrative may also be behind Is. 18:2¹⁹⁸⁸ and 63:11.¹⁹⁸⁹ The latter verse appears to have no overt connection to a myth of combat. The former passage, however, features a parallelism of the sea and the waters, but the river is mentioned in the other half of the verse. The connection between a river and a foreign nation is explicated in the verse.

While some of the passages, especially the Jeremiahic verses, may refer to forms of the myth which predate the Exilic Exodus-narratives, the presence of the idea of the divine weapon is one of the features of the Exodus-narratives that subvert tropes of kingship. In addition to the extremity of the divinity, the idea of the divine weapon of the king is also present in the staff (מִצֵּדָה) of Moses (e.g. Ex. 4:4),¹⁹⁹⁰ which is not used to defeat the serpent but which is in itself a serpent. Moses, functioning as the anti-king, is presented with the regalia of a king and the symbols of kingship, while what his character actually represents is the absence of kingship. Moses – *brother* to the crown-prince and adopted by the *daughter* of the king instead of the king himself,¹⁹⁹¹ found in a basket in the river, who parts the

¹⁹⁸⁵ “You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heard their cry by the *Red Sea*. And you *divided the sea* before them, so they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground; and their pursuers you hurled into the depths, like a stone into raging waters”.

¹⁹⁸⁶ “And he will pass *through the sea* of distress, and *strike* the waves in *the sea*, so that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; and the pride of Assyria will be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt will depart”.

¹⁹⁸⁷ Edelman 2012, 167.

¹⁹⁸⁸ “Which sends envoys *by the sea*, even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation whose land the *rivers divide*”.

¹⁹⁸⁹ “Then his people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is he who brought them up *out of the sea* with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put his holy spirit in the midst of them?”

¹⁹⁹⁰ In Ex. 14:21, Moses stretched out his hand to part the waters: וַיִּשָּׂא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-הַיָּם וַיִּחַלֶּךְ.

¹⁹⁹¹ Sabo (2014, 413–414) saw in this a thematic of female saviours, and in fact interpreted the Pharaoh ordering the throwing of the male infants into the river as a reinterpretation of Moses’ birth. There is inversion in the narrative, which I interpret as specific inversions of the Neo-Assyrian Sargonid version of the OB Sargonic narrative, as this interpretation offers a political

sea with his serpent-weapon and brings the law to the people only to smash it up in front of them – is like the reflection of a funhouse mirror of the character of Sargon the Great of the popular Sargon legends, which were still widely circulated in the Mesopotamian area during the writing of the Exodus.

There are also several poetic fragments in the HB mentioning the Sea which belong to the Mosaic traditions and which may owe influence to the hybrid Babylonian version of the Combat Myth with its cleaving of the sea. Even though the red colour has little to do with the various meanings of the Hebrew word *סֹדֶם*, this “Sea of Sūf” of the HB is traditionally translated as the Red Sea, apparently following the Septuagint (Ερυθρά θάλασσα, whence the *Mare rubrum* of the Latin Vulgate).¹⁹⁹² It seems, however, that the term was not associated with the Red Sea until the Greek translation of the Septuagint, even though it has been interpreted as referring at least either to the Gulf of Suez or to the Gulf of Aqaba already in the texts of the HB (e.g. in Ex. 10:19, Num. 21:4, 33:10–11, 1 Kgs 9:26 and Jer. 49:21).¹⁹⁹³ The Exodus traditions can naturally also be found in the Book of Exodus, where the sea features in several passages, especially in Ex. 14, the so-called Song of the Sea. Other passages in Ex. mentioning the sea include 13:18,¹⁹⁹⁴ 14:16,¹⁹⁹⁵ 14:21–23,¹⁹⁹⁶ and 14:26–29.¹⁹⁹⁷ The same tradition is revisited in Deuteronomy 11:4,¹⁹⁹⁸ and 30:13.¹⁹⁹⁹

motive for such inversions.

¹⁹⁹² Wyatt 1996, 87. Strabo (*Geography* 16.4.20) explains the association of the sea with the colour red as having to do with the reflection of the mountains on its surface, a spring of ochre-coloured water emptying into it, and other folk explanations for the name.

¹⁹⁹³ Batto 1983, 27; Wyatt 2005, 38; Hoffmeier 1999, 205–206; Huddleston 1992, 633.

¹⁹⁹⁴ “Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to *the Red Sea*; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt”.

¹⁹⁹⁵ “And as for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand *over the sea and divide it*, and the sons of Israel shall go through the *midst of the sea* on dry land”.

¹⁹⁹⁶ “Then Moses stretched out *his hand over the sea*; and Yahweh swept *the sea* back by a strong east wind all night, and turned *the sea* into dry land, so the waters were divided. And the sons of Israel went through the *midst of the sea* on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the *midst of the sea*”.

¹⁹⁹⁷ “Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Stretch out *your hand over the sea* so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen. So Moses stretched out *his hand over the sea*, and *the sea* returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the *midst of the sea*. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh’s entire army that had gone *into the sea* after them; not even one of them remained. But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the *midst of the sea*, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left”.

¹⁹⁹⁸ “And what he did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and its chariots, when he made the water of *the Red Sea* to engulf them while they were pursuing you, and Yahweh completely destroyed them”.

¹⁹⁹⁹ “Nor is it *beyond the sea*, that you should say, ‘Who will *cross the sea* for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’”

According to Batto, the term יַם־סוּף does refer to the Red Sea, or at least to some part of the Red Sea, in every occurrence apart from the instances referring to the miracle at the sea.²⁰⁰⁰ In the HB, the actual Red Sea was called by a name referencing the red colour (הַיָּם הָאֵדוֹם), which has also been translated as the “Sea of Edom”. This prompted Hoffmeier to suggest that the Red Sea proper may have received its name from the ancient Edomites inhabiting the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba in the LBA. According to him, the translation of יַם־סוּף as the Red Sea in the Septuagint is a secondary, erroneous interpretation of the Hebrew term. Moreover, he ventured that it is not actually a translation of the Hebrew term at all, but rather its historicized interpretation.²⁰⁰¹ The term יַם־סוּף has been translated as “Reed Sea” or “the Sea of Reeds” (German *Schilfmeer*) apparently following the Protestant reformer Martin Luther, but references to the reed plant have been found in connection with the term even prior to this, e.g. in the Exodus commentary of the French Rabbi Rashi (or Shlomo Yitzhaki) in the 11th century.²⁰⁰²

The translation of the term יַם־סוּף as ‘Reed Sea’ is based on an ostensible cognate in the Egyptian word *ṯwf(y)*, the meaning of which is ‘reed’ or ‘papyrus plant’. The hypothesis seems mostly based on the P.Anastasi III (2.11–12), on which also rests the theoretical association of the Pharaoh of the Exodus with the historical Ramesses II.²⁰⁰³ The Hebrew word סוּף (*sūf*) does seem to refer to the reed plant apart from the יַם־סוּף -construct in some Biblical verses e.g. (Ex. 2:3, 5, Jon. 2:6, and Is. 19:6).²⁰⁰⁴ In Biblical scholarship, the name Reed Sea has usually been used to refer to a non-specific body of water north of the Gulf of Suez, based on the claim that reeds or the papyrus plant do not grow in the salt water of the Red Sea. Lakes found in the broad area north of Suez include Bardawil, Timsah, el-Ballah, Edko, Mariout, Manzala and the Bitter Lakes.²⁰⁰⁵

Hoffmeier argued, however, that the sort of reed or marsh plant that the Egyptian word *ṯwf(y)* or *čwf(y)*²⁰⁰⁶ can be used to refer to does also grow in salt

²⁰⁰⁰ Batto 1983, 28.

²⁰⁰¹ Hoffmeier 1999, 204–206. Also Wyatt 2005, 198.

²⁰⁰² Hoffmeier 1999, 204.

²⁰⁰³ Batto 1983, 29; Fabry 1999, 97; Hoffmeier 1999, 210, 214. Note, however, Strabo’s description of Lake Kinnereth: “It also contains a lake, which produces the aromatic rush (ἄρωματῖτον σχοῖνον) and reed; and likewise marshes. The lake is called Gennesaritis” (*Geography* 16.2.16). If one wishes to find a real-world correspondent to the Reed Sea of the texts, then Lake Kinnereth is as good a candidate as any.

²⁰⁰⁴ Batto 1983, 27; Hoffmeier 1999, 200; Wyatt 2005, 199.

²⁰⁰⁵ Batto 1983, 28; Wyatt 1996, 87–88; Wyatt 2005, 38.

²⁰⁰⁶ So Gardiner 1918, 116. According to Ward 1974, 339, the word is “almost universally”

marsh areas.²⁰⁰⁷ He pointed out that many of the lakes in the Suez isthmus are highly saline and are known to have been so historically. But apart from botanical considerations, it is also on the textual basis of Ex. 12:37 that attempts have been made to pinpoint the location of the Reed Sea to one of the many lakes of the Suez isthmus. In this verse, the people of Israel make their way from “Ramses to Succoth”, which has been interpreted as meaning that the journey of the people of Israel away from Egypt and toward the wilderness began at the city of Ramses (רַמְסֵס). The Biblical Ramses is possibly the same as the capital city of pharaoh Ramesses II, Pi-Ramesses (modern *Tell el-Dab'a* in the Nile Delta), built on the site of the former Hyksos capital of Avaris.²⁰⁰⁸ Of the many lakes in the Suez isthmus, Lake Manzala in particular was for a time held as a formidable candidate for the location of the Reed Sea on the basis of associating Pi-Ramesses with the Biblical Ramses.²⁰⁰⁹ In addition to the various gulfs and lakes of the Egypto-Levant area, it is also the Mediterranean Sea itself which has been proposed as the location of the Biblical Reed Sea, apparently on the basis of Jon. 2:5.²⁰¹⁰

In addition to attempts to discover the physical location of the Reed Sea within the confines of the real world, the question has been raised in recent decades as to whether the term should refer to any historically or geographically definable location at all. A suggestion has been made that especially in the earliest mythical tradition, the term would have been used to refer to the motif of the mythical “chaos battle”, and that in this usage of the term the language of creation mythology is employed.²⁰¹¹ According to Wyatt, the Reed Sea is more of an example of symbolic geography which did not have actual geographic significance, at least to begin with. The notion of the Reed Sea being a location in symbolic geography is corroborated by the fact that due to various trade routes and war roads between Egypt and the Levant, the ancient Hebrews must have been well aware of the land isthmus connecting the areas.²⁰¹² It is also worth noting that the many uses of the term in different formulations of the Exodus-narrative do not form a unified geographic model.²⁰¹³ The sea is not crossed because a sea needed to be crossed geographically, but because one needed to be

transcribed *ṣwfy*. Most authors remarking on the Reed Sea seem to prefer the form *lwf*.

²⁰⁰⁷ Hoffmeier 1999, 209.

²⁰⁰⁸ Redford 1992, 103.

²⁰⁰⁹ Batto 1983, 28–29; Hoffmeier 1999, 209–210.

²⁰¹⁰ Segert 1994, 201; Wyatt 2005, 199.

²⁰¹¹ Ottosson 1974, 194.

²⁰¹² Batto 1983, 35; Wyatt 1996, 89, 104; Wyatt 2005, 40.

²⁰¹³ Ottosson 1974, 193.

crossed symbolically, and the symbolic need for the crossing of the sea comes from the Combat Myth and its connection to political ideology.

Derived from the Hebrew verbal root סוף, with the niqqud סוף the word has been interpreted as meaning either ‘end’, ‘border’ or ‘destruction’.²⁰¹⁴ But it is also with the niqqud סִי, the form that we find in the actual term יַם־סִי, that the word has been suggested as having a similar meaning, at least in Jon 2:6. Wyatt pointed out that the question of the vocalization of the word does not significantly affect its interpretation – what we have is merely the difference between the verbal infinitive and the nominal form of the word. According to him, translating the word with the colour red (and the term itself as the Red Sea) in the Septuagint also proves very little of its historical or geographic understanding – apart from the fact that at the time of the writing of the Septuagint the term was associated with the Red Sea in nineteen separate verses.²⁰¹⁵

With the meaning of ‘end’, the Hebrew word סוף is considered a rather late Aramaic loan. Hoffmeier submitted, however, that it is only through the Exodus-narrative that the word even received this particular meaning.²⁰¹⁶ Interpreting the word with the meaning of ‘end’ has found support in the fact that in 1 Kgs 9:26, the Septuagint translated יַם־סִי with τῆς ἐσχάτης θαλάσσης, referring to the ‘ultimate sea’.²⁰¹⁷ It is based on this Septuagint translation, and on the Samaritan Pentateuch, that ‘border sea’ and ‘border lake’ have also been suggested as possible translations of the term – albeit these translations have never found much popularity in Biblical research. According to Ottosson, an original “border sea” would only secondarily have been associated with the name referring to the reed plant.²⁰¹⁸ This meaning of ‘border sea’ might, however, be revisited in light of the use of the term ‘sea’ in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions in the demarcating the borders of the Empire with bodies of water as displays of symbolic geography, (discussed in section 6.4.3).

Considerations such as these have led to the suggestion that sometimes, or at least in some instances, the term יַם־סִי may have had the meaning of a sea located “at the end of the world”.²⁰¹⁹ According to the old paradigm, the image of

²⁰¹⁴ The word can be found with this meaning in Jer. 8:13, Is. 66:17, and Am. 3:15.

²⁰¹⁵ Batto 1983, 32; Wyatt 2003, 55; Wyatt 2005, 197–199.

²⁰¹⁶ Batto 1983, 32; Hoffmeier 1999, 214.

²⁰¹⁷ Batto 1983, 32; Hoffmeier 1999, 203, 205.

²⁰¹⁸ Lamberty-Zielinski 1974, 192; Ottosson 1974, 193–194.

²⁰¹⁹ Wyatt 2005, 198. The first to suggest translating יַם־סִי as the ‘Sea of Ending’ was probably Ahlström 1977.

a sea at the world's end finds its symbolic backdrop in creation mythology.²⁰²⁰ Creation mythology aside, such imagery is reminiscent of NWS cosmology. Within this ancient cosmology, shared by the ancient Hebrews and other NWS peoples, the 'earth disc' was believed to be secured over the waters, while the edges of the world were on all sides surrounded by the sea, the abyss.²⁰²¹ Words of known mythological connotations, such as תְּהוֹם ('the deep') and תְּהוֹמוֹת ('the deeps') that can be found in connection with יַם־סוּף in Ex. 15:4–5, would seem to offer some basis for the cosmological interpretation of the term. The words תְּהוֹם and סוּף are also contrasted in Jon. 2:6, although the word 'sea' is not specifically mentioned. Wyatt suggested that in this particular instance, יַם־סוּף could be translated as the 'primordial' or 'primal' sea. Every noun in the verse could be understood as literally describing an actual facet of the real world, but the poetic language in the passage also allows for their mythological interpretation – or at least their allusion to mythology.²⁰²²

This is why one of the alternative translations offered to יַם־סוּף is "Sea of End", which is according to Batto what it literally means. Symbolically, the 'chaotic' sea would have signified the end of the world to the ancient man.²⁰²³ Another fact supporting the mythological interpretation of the term is that in Exodus, the name יַם־סוּף is only employed in the older poetic portions of the texts, not in the prose parts of the narrative.²⁰²⁴ Wyatt, for his part, put forward the possibility of translating יַם־סוּף as the "Sea of Extinction", which was understood as existing between the land of the dead, represented by Egypt, and the land of the living yearned for by the ancient Israelites. According to him, the term represents an Israelite conception of the cosmic sea.²⁰²⁵ The sea, which destroyed the pursuing Egyptians, was associated with the concept of the primordial sea at some point in the history of its textual transmission. This cleaving of the waters in the narrative recalls the cleaving of the chaos monster, such as is found in the Babylonian creation epic.

Tugendhaft pointed out correctly that unlike the Babylonian Tiamat, the Ugaritic Yamm is not a primordial adversary whose defeat ushers in a new

²⁰²⁰ Ottosson 1974, 195; Batto 1983, 35; Dozeman 1996, 408–409; Fabry 1999, 98.

²⁰²¹ Wyatt 2005, 40–41; Stoltz 1999, 737–740.

²⁰²² Ottosson 1974, 193; Wyatt 1996, 88.

²⁰²³ Batto 1983, 31–34; Dozeman 1996, 409–410; Segert 1994, 197; Wyatt 1996, 86; Wyatt 2005, 198.

²⁰²⁴ Segert 1994, 196.

²⁰²⁵ Wyatt 2003, 147; Wyatt 2005, 38–39, 197, 199.

epoch.²⁰²⁶ In these verses, natural, historical, and mythical themes would have merged and blended in such a way as to make it next to impossible to determine anymore which tradition borrowed from what.²⁰²⁷ The difficulty in assigning one particular origin to the traditions does not mean that the tradition itself cannot be detected in the verses, however. According to the prevailing paradigm, at a later stage this originally mythical sea would have been demythologized for the use of a historical narrative in the Exodus. Conceiving of the term in a geographic and historical framework would hark back to the most recent, Priestly layer of the narrative.²⁰²⁸ Kloos argued, however, against the notion that any actual historical event had been mythicized or mythologized in the form of this narrative.²⁰²⁹

It is likely that the current text is the product of an ideological programme using older mythological language of both NWS and Babylonian sources as well as local traditions of the myth for the creation of a new national, political myth. The term יַם־סוּף would have been understood originally, or in the earliest mythic tradition, as a purely mythological or symbolic concept with no corresponding physical location.²⁰³⁰ As such, it may also find association in the Egyptian term *š i3r(w)*, ‘reed lake’, which is found in many ancient Pyramid and Coffin Texts from the time of the Old Kingdom, as well as in the Book of the Dead. The Pyramid Texts make references to the area of Syro-Palestine, and they may even contain Syro-Palestinian influence.²⁰³¹ This ‘reed lake’ was used to refer to a celestial or supercaelian sea where the pharaoh was purified after his death.²⁰³² In addition to ‘sea’, the Hebrew יָם can also refer to lakes. The symbolic or mythical understanding of יַם־סוּף also seems to find support in the fact that attempts to interpret it within the confines of the real world give rise to several geographic and physical problems, especially when trying to reconcile it with a literal or historical interpretation of the Biblical text.²⁰³³

In the actual Exodus passages mentioning the term יַם־סוּף, one finds very

²⁰²⁶ Tugendhaft 2012a, 368.

²⁰²⁷ Fabry 1999, 94; Stoltz 1999, 741.

²⁰²⁸ Batto 1983, 30, 35.

²⁰²⁹ Kloos 1986, 191.

²⁰³⁰ Dozeman 1996, 408.

²⁰³¹ Wright 1988, 146.

²⁰³² Dozeman 1996, 408; Wyatt 2005, 38; Hoffmeier 1999, 204, 214. Wright (1988, 152) called attention to the fact that the gates of heaven in these Pyramid Texts were believed by the Egyptians to have been made from Syro-Palestinian pine trees, which provides evidence of more Levantine influence on the texts. Therefore, I find it unlikely that the concept of *š i3r(w)* would have influenced the יַם־סוּף, although conversely the NWS concept of the supercaelian sea may have lent influence on the use of the term in the Pyramid Texts.

²⁰³³ Fabry 1999, 97.

few references to natural factors,²⁰³⁴ which may further support the argument that, for the most part, it represents a mythical conception of the term. It must be pointed out that *ym*, with the meaning of ‘the sea’, appears as a loan word in Middle Egyptian, and that no place-name corresponding exactly to the Hebrew term is known from Egyptian texts. Physical, meteorological explanations for the phenomenon of the cleaving of the sea have, however, been offered (for example by Nof & Paldor). According to them, a strong north-western wind would have pushed back the waters of the Red Sea, allowing the people of Israel to walk across on an underwater ridge. They also located the place of the crossing at the northernmost reaches of the Red Sea.²⁰³⁵

Hoffmeier also attempted to create some sort of physical conditions for the crossing of the sea; for example, he claimed that in ancient times the Red Sea reached all the way up to the Bitter Lakes, which in his view would have been easier to cross than the Red Sea. He admitted that it is impossible to determine the exact location of the יַם־סוּף on the basis of the textual evidence.²⁰³⁶ One of the reasons for attempting to locate the Reed Sea in the Egyptian lake district is the notion that crossing a smaller body of water would have been ‘easier’ than crossing the relatively vast expanse of the Red Sea, and that it might thus be easier to come up with a physical basis or support for such a crossing.

The etymology of the term, as derived from an Egyptian loan word, may also have added to the historical and geographic credibility of the narrative.²⁰³⁷ Such theories, however, rarely engage with the fact that even in the Egyptian language, the word *twf(y)* is relatively late, appearing only in Late Egyptian.²⁰³⁸ When the narrative in Exodus has been interpreted literally, the physical explanations for the phenomenon of the cleaving of the sea have included things such as earthquakes, tides and tidal waves.²⁰³⁹ In this regard it is worth noting that commenting on the narrative in *Ant.* 2.16.2–3, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who lived in the first century CE, made no references to natural factors in connection with the crossing of the sea. It is only in later times that the mythical or allegorical interpretation of the narrative seems to have started posing a problem, demanding a physical explanation for the miraculous phenomenon.

²⁰³⁴ Segert 1994, 196.

²⁰³⁵ Paldor & Nof 1992, 311–312.

²⁰³⁶ Hoffmeier 1999, 207–210.

²⁰³⁷ Wyatt 2005, 199.

²⁰³⁸ Lamberty-Zielinski 1974, 191.

²⁰³⁹ Segert 1994, 195–196.

In terms of mythological use, the term יַם־סוּף is most readily found in the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15:1–18), which is ostensibly part of the archaic poetic texts of the HB. It has been suggested that the topic of the text is actually the triumph of Yahweh over the sea. Batto regarded the Song of the Sea as the earliest text in the HB to mention the term יַם־סוּף.²⁰⁴⁰ This originally strictly mythical narrative would have been reinterpreted in the course of its Deuteronomistic redaction. As a physical phenomenon of the real world, the crossing of the sea would then have been employed in salvation history, and strong theological interest ensured that successive generations continued to transmit the myth.²⁰⁴¹ Segert suggested that the prose parts of the narrative in Exodus were originally patched together from different sources, as evidenced by the fact that some details seem to be mentioned twice.²⁰⁴² His suggestion is corroborated by the examination of the sources of the mythic traditions, as discussed here. It is during this combination of different sources that the themes of the crossing of the sea and the crossing of the Jordan would also have been connected.²⁰⁴³ The traditions of the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan seem to be associated already in the texts of the HB (e.g. Josh. 2:10; 5:1). Furthermore, Josh. 3:16 features vocabulary used in connection with the crossing of the Reed Sea.

The sea is mentioned six times in Ex. 15. This section is generally thought to be much older than its surrounding texts. The passage may contain older NWS poetic fragments, which were used to provide authenticity to the newer text to bolster the ideological programme of the Post-Exilic situation.²⁰⁴⁴ Ex. 15:1, 4, 8, 10, 19, 21, being the passages that make mention of the sea, read:

Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to Yahweh, and said, “I will sing to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted; the horse and its rider he has *hurled into the sea*. Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he has *cast into the sea*; and the choicest of his officers are drowned in *the Reed Sea*. And at the blast of your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing waters stood up like a heap;²⁰⁴⁵ the deeps were congealed in *the heart of the sea*. You blew with your wind, *the sea covered* them; they sank like lead in the Great waters. For the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went *into the sea*, and Yahweh brought back the *waters of the sea* on them; but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through *the midst of the sea*. And Miriam answered them, “Sing to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted; the horse and his rider he has *hurled into the sea*”.

²⁰⁴⁰ Batto 1983, 30.

²⁰⁴¹ Fabry 1999, 104.

²⁰⁴² Segert 1994, 196–197. Also Batto 1983, 28.

²⁰⁴³ Dozeman 1996, 408–410.

²⁰⁴⁴ For a thorough and recent exegetical examination of the Song of the Sea, Brenner 1991 and Russell 2007 may be consulted. The former study is a standard exegetical analysis of the passage of Ex. 15:1–21, while the latter discussed the historical, linguistic, and intertextual questions pertaining to the passage.

²⁰⁴⁵ The heaping of the waters is also featured in Ps. 78:13, 33:7, Josh. 3:16, and Ex. 15:8. Wilson (2014, 138) also described Is. 12:2 as the perfect intertext with Ex. 15:2.

The Song has been seen both as containing pre-monarchic archaic poetic material and as a post-monarchic composition.²⁰⁴⁶ According to Spieckermann, it was because Ex. 15 contained such strong reminders of the ‘mythology of the Canaanite combat myth’ (“*Gotteskampf der kanaanäischen Mythologie*”) that it did not find a place among the psalms transmitted in the Psalter, in spite of clearly consisting of poetry.²⁰⁴⁷

Most scholarship accepts the Song as a separate composition from the framing prose narrative, although Wilson argued for it being connected with the surrounding narrative.²⁰⁴⁸ He remarked on the polyvalence with regard to time and place in the text, suggesting that this is what made the text “easily translatable from one socio-cultural milieu to another”, being a mnemonic site for the community to visit generation after generation.²⁰⁴⁹ While all of this rings true, in the context of the broader tradition the Song of the Sea is merely one iteration, one site of the memory, and one example of the use of this narrative pattern as a mnemonic site. Wilson also made the important observation that it is the sea that anchors this social memory. The sea is the most central symbol in this mythic pattern.

The drowning of the horses is especially striking in the passages, considering the possible connection between that animal and the sea-god. The meaning of the name of Miryam (מִרְיָם) has also raised some questions over the years. While the latter part of the name has traditionally been connected with the sea, possibly due to the connection of the name to the Song of the Sea, the etymology of the first part has been sought from the Egyptian ‘beloved’ (*mr-*), from the Ugaritic ‘fatling’ (*mr̥y*),²⁰⁵⁰ and from the Hebrew ‘to be bitter’ (מָרַר). Each etymology is as uncertain as the next. It is the clustering of terminology of the Combat Myth and the connection of the myth itself to various ‘bitter lakes’ in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean (i.e. the fact that the Combat Myth seems to have been localized in bodies of salt or brackish water especially) that leads me to accept the Hebrew etymology. The name ‘Bitter sea’ or ‘Bitter lake’ fits the context, alluding to the location of the myth, and it is probably the more original setting for it prior to the attachment of the text to the Exodus-narrative and its

²⁰⁴⁶ Wilson 2014, 127–128.

²⁰⁴⁷ Spieckermann 1989, 284.

²⁰⁴⁸ Wilson 2014, 130.

²⁰⁴⁹ Wilson 2014, 132–133.

²⁰⁵⁰ In the sense of ‘prized’, ‘beloved’.

transference to the ‘Reed sea’, wherever that is to be located. In fact, Miryam may not have initially been the name of a person at all, but may have functioned as the title or *Leitwort* for the tradition which has only secondarily been attached to the character of Moses.²⁰⁵¹

According to Hoffmeier, the fact that the term יַם־סוּף can be found in the Song of the Sea, the dating of which he seems to want to stretch all the way to 13th-century Ugarit, would prove at least that the phrase is not a later addition to it. While the Song of the Sea is most likely not directly linked to the texts from Ugarit, Hoffmeier is not the first to have found ancient NWS or “Canaanite” influences in it.²⁰⁵² In addition, Hoffmeier claimed that even though it contains mythological terms, the hymnic portion of the narrative does not in its main points significantly differ from its prose portion (Ex. 14:21, 31). According to him, the mythological imagery employed in the narrative does not make it ahistorical.²⁰⁵³ While it is true that the use of mythological language is not enough to make the narrative ahistorical, the miraculous and unrealistic elements included in it – elements which commentators have been anxious to explain away for at least two millennia – are what makes its historicity suspect.²⁰⁵⁴

Wilson suggested that the Song of the Sea does not fit the trope of *Chaoskampf* because it lacks a “genuinely cosmic enemy”, and in fact it “makes one think of the divine warrior who fights earthly battles for his/her chosen human regent”. He also observed that in the passage Yahweh is both “deity *and* king”, who fights for his chosen people, suggesting that this is an argument against reading the text in the *Chaoskampf* tradition.²⁰⁵⁵ If anything, his argumentation displays how the metanarrative of the battle against chaos can be a hindrance and obstruct the drawing of necessary conclusions. The observations Wilson makes are valid, but he merely lacks the context in which they ought to be framed.

Gaster was correct when he remarked that the Song of the Sea bears resemblance to both the myths of Marduk and Baal in that the victory of Yahweh is followed by his enthronement as king, which is natural if the older traditions were used in the constructing of the new. Gaster also joined the idea of temple-

²⁰⁵¹ Berge (2014, 107–108) discussed the passage of Ex. 15:22–26, in which a piece of wood is thrown into the ‘bitter’ water by Moses, transforming it into sweet water. The verb used in the passage, שָׁלַח, is the same used in connection with Yahweh casting down lightning, which I have discussed in connection with the divine weapon. See Töyräänvuori 2012.

²⁰⁵² Ottosson 1974, 194; Segert 1994, 196.

²⁰⁵³ Hoffmeier 1999, 203, 213.

²⁰⁵⁴ Segert 1994, 196–197.

²⁰⁵⁵ Wilson 2014, 134.

building into the sequence, although I hold that the combat-victory-kingship (conflict-resolution-reward) myth is separate from the palace-building sequence (reward-conflict-resolution), as much as they are entwined.²⁰⁵⁶ In the Ugaritic myth-arc, no combat precedes the building of the palace as such, although when the six tablets of the Baal Cycle are taken as one continuous narrative, the building of Baal's palace is usually read in the context of the battle with Yamm, which may have very little to do with the palace-building motif thematically or narratively. I have discussed in an earlier chapter the self-contained nature of the narrative of Baal's battle against Yamm, in light of which the temple-building sequence can only be secondary. The theme of the cleaving of the sea, on the other hand, owes much to the imagery and language of Mesopotamian creation mythology and features in the Ugaritic texts not at all.

The halving or twinning of a whole is characteristic of Sumerian creation stories. Perhaps owing to this influence, the feminine chaos-monster Tiamat is famously cleft in half in the Babylonian creation epic, so that the world may be created from her carcass by the storm-god Marduk.²⁰⁵⁷ While no direct mention of such an act can be found in the Ugaritic texts, according to Wyatt we ought to read a similar cleaving and creation of the world from the carcass of Yamm into the Ugaritic texts as well, if implicitly.²⁰⁵⁸ While this is true in a broad sense, it does not necessarily increase our understanding of the Ugaritic texts. Some scholars, such as Hutton, have simply gone ahead and read this into the texts ("cleaving of the sea, familiar from Ugaritic literature...")²⁰⁵⁹ without referencing any Ugaritic texts to support the assertion. At least citing a text, Loewenstamm claimed that the sea is cleft in KTU 1.83.²⁰⁶⁰ As discussed previously, this is conjecture based on little evidence. Whether cleaving is present is an important distinguishing characteristic between the older Amorite myth and the later Babylonian myth. The Amorite myth uses clubbing by maces to defeat the sea because a mace was the weapon that Sargon dedicated to the Storm-God of Aleppo on his way to conquer the Mediterranean Sea, and against this historical backdrop, one would not expect to find the idea of cleaving in the NWS versions.

Kloos discussed the phrase 'the heart of the sea' in the context of the Song

²⁰⁵⁶ Gaster 1969, 241.

²⁰⁵⁷ Stoltz 1999, 738.

²⁰⁵⁸ Wyatt 2003, 152.

²⁰⁵⁹ Hutton 2007, 287.

²⁰⁶⁰ Loewenstamm 1980, 357.

of the Sea. She compared the use here to Ez. 27:4, 25–26, 28:2, 8, Prov. 23:34, Jon. 2:4, and Ps. 46:3, concluding that the phrase does not imply depth in spite of sometimes being paralleled by phrases indicating the deep. She suggested that the parallelism of the heart of the seas and the Deep has a mythological foundation in the song.²⁰⁶¹ ‘Heart of the sea’ is one of the phrases used in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, so the use of the construction may add weight to the suggestion that the later redactional layers of the passage are Post-Exilic. Kloos considered the Reed Sea story wholly fictive and mythical due to its fantastic elements, and she held that the historicity of the Exodus has no bearing on her assessment of the historicity of the Reed Sea story.²⁰⁶² I am inclined to agree with Kloos on the part of the Reed Sea narrative. While I do not think that the Exodus story is “wholly fictive”, I do think that it is an extremely political text, which is easier to contextualize as a product of the Exile than as a historical record of a mass migration from Egypt in days of yore which left no traces in the Egyptian records. Ottosson also seemed convinced that the narrative transcends the limitations of geography and history.²⁰⁶³

In addition to the mythological language employed in the narrative, one further factor would seem to weigh against its interpretation as a historical event: the fact that the earliest layers of the narrative are poetic in nature.²⁰⁶⁴ The term יָם־סוּף is in fact often found in connection with Biblical poetry. The Sea of Sūf is mentioned in Psalms 106:7, 9, 22 and 136:13, 15. Psalms 106 and 136 are considered to be historiographic psalms belonging to the Deuteronomistic tradition, containing a narrative of salvation history. They are also traditionally dated rather late in comparison to the other psalms. The psalms are witness to the fact that the Exodus tradition was, at some point, influenced by, merged with, or connected to the myth of the divine combat, of Yahweh’s battle with the sea.²⁰⁶⁵ Kloos, for example, submitted that the Reed Sea motif is merely a Yahwistic attempt to historicize the battle between Baal and Yamm.²⁰⁶⁶

Ps. 106 contains four mentions of the word ‘sea’:

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא־הִשְׁכַּחְנוּ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ	106:7	Our fathers in Egypt gave no heed to your wonders;
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²⁰⁶¹ Kloos 1986, 129.

²⁰⁶² Kloos 1986, 168.

²⁰⁶³ Ottosson 1974, 194.

²⁰⁶⁴ Batto 1983, 30.

²⁰⁶⁵ Stolt 1999, 741.

²⁰⁶⁶ Kloos 1986, 127–212.

לֹא זָכְרוּ אֶת־רַב־חַסְדֶּיךָ וַיִּקְרֹוּ עַל־יָם בָּיִם־סוּף	didn't remember the multitude of your mercies and were rebellious <i>at the sea, on the sea of Sūf</i>
וַיִּגְעַר בַּיָּם־סוּף 106:9 וַיִּתְחַבֵּב וַיּוֹלִיכֵם בְּתֵהוֹמוֹת כַּמְדָּבָר	And he rebuked the <i>sea of Sūf</i> and it was dried up, and he led them through the depths like a desert
נִפְלְאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ חָם 106:22 נִוְרָאוֹת עַל־יָם־סוּף	[They had forgotten] the wonders in the land of Ham, terrible things <i>on the sea of Sūf</i>

Verse 106:7 features two occurrences of the word ‘sea’. It makes mention of the rebellion of the people on the Sea of Sūf. The LXX (Ps. 105:7) seems to have read the words “on the sea” (עַל־יָם) as “those who go up” (עֹלִים), based on the Greek term ἀναβαίνοντες (lit. ‘those who go up’). One of the suggested readings of the verse by the BHS editors, based on the Greek translation, is “on the Sea of Sūf against you” (עַל־יָם־סוּף בְּךָ). Based on the principle of *lectio difficilior*, the LXX translation may however be a correction, as “against the sea, at/on the sea” is grammatically strange and seems to add an unnecessary, repetitive element into the text – unless interpreted against the backdrop of the mythic tradition: on the Sea of Sūf against the Sea.

In v. 106:9, Yahweh rebukes the Sea of Sūf. The vocabulary is reminiscent not just of the Ugaritic texts, but also of 2 Sam. 15:23. The only word in the verse that cannot be found in the Ugaritic Baal-texts is ‘Sūf’. Two of the Storm-God’s enemies appear in this verse, paralleling one another: the Sea and the Deep, Yamm and Tiamat, which could hint at the combination of the older mythic traditions with the newer Exilic narrative. According to Lelièvre, this verse describes how Yahweh, enraged by the sea, curses it and dries it up.²⁰⁶⁷ The concept of the drying up of Yamm or the sea has been discussed in connection with the Ugaritic text KTU 1.83, which is popularly read in terms of the idea.²⁰⁶⁸ It is possible that the Exodus traditions affected the readings of the Ugaritic texts, as the concept is somewhat difficult to apply to the anthropomorphic nature of Yamm or to the possibly theriomorphic but non-elemental natures of Baal’s other enemies in the Baal Cycle.

V. 106:11, which does not feature the word ‘sea’, does however describe how the waters “covered their adversaries” (מִיִּם צָרְיָהֶם־וַיִּכְסּוּ). The verb ‘to cover’ is the same as that used in Ps. 78:53, which does mention the sea, albeit the word for

²⁰⁶⁷ Lelièvre 1976, 253–257. Also Fabry 1999, 101, according to whom Ps. 66:6 also features this motif.

²⁰⁶⁸ Wyatt (2001,101) even interpreted Baal as drinking (yšt) Yamm to finish off their battle in KTU 1.2 IV 27. I am not convinced that this is the correct interpretation, as yšt is notoriously difficult to translate and is here paralleled by ykly, “he finished off” or “destroyed utterly”.

‘enemy’ is different in both psalms. While it is not explicitly stated, the idea of the cleaving of the sea could be implicitly present in the verse. V. 106:22 features another mention of the Sea of Sūf, pairing it with “frightening things” (נִוְרָאוֹת). There seems to be no explicit connection between this verse and the Combat Myth. But the mention of the sea of Sūf connects it with the Exodus-tradition. According to Fabry, the earliest Yahwistic layer of the narrative contains a theme “familiar from Canaanite mythology” – that of the drying up of the sea. In Post-Exilic times this narrative would have accumulated the language of creation mythology and the cosmological battle between Marduk and Tiamat, especially in the later Priestly layer, to which the cleaving of the sea intimately belongs.²⁰⁶⁹ Fabry also argued that the themes of the drying up of the sea and the cleaving of the sea are two separate traditions.²⁰⁷⁰

Sūf is also mentioned twice in Ps. 136:

בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוֹעַ מְטוּיָה	136:12–13	With a strong hand and with an outstretched arm
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדָיו		(for his mercy endures forever)
לְגִזֹּר יַם־סוּף לִגְזָרִים		To the divider of the <i>sea of Sūf</i> in sunder
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדָיו		(for his mercy endures forever)

וַיִּצָּר פַּרְעֹה וְחֵילוֹ בַּיַּם־סוּף	136:15	And he overthrew Pharaoh and his army on the <i>sea of Sūf</i>
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדָיו		(for his mercy endures forever)

In Ps. 136:13–15 we have an example of the cleaving of the יַם־סוּף, through which the people of Israel are led out of Egypt before the armies of the Pharaoh are drowned in the waters. Kloos suggested that when it comes to the Reed Sea narratives, the theme of the cleaving may have been a later development.²⁰⁷¹ Ps. 136:12 also features a mention of the strong hand and outstretched arm of Yahweh, alluding to the divine weapon. It precedes the mention of the Sea of Sūf in the following verse. In v. 13, the sea is divided in two, and in v. 15 the Pharaoh and his armies are overthrown on the Sea of Sūf. As v. 15 is slightly longer than the other verses, it has been suggested that the words בַּיַּם־סוּף may be superfluous to the poetic metre. The verse is not that much longer than the other verses, however, so if something is superfluous or supernumerary to the verse, it may simply be the word סוּף. The psalm has a chorus, which is repeated at the end of

²⁰⁶⁹ Batto 1983, 35; Fabry 1999, 98–103. Note Kloos (1986, 201), however, according to whom “the idea of that the Reed Sea was split in two emerged only in later times”. The Exodus traditions are undoubtedly layered, but should their origins be in the Babylonian community, then the influence of *EE* on the motif of the crossing of the יַם־סוּף is likely. It is difficult to ascertain a Pre-Exilic kernel for the Israelite narrative.

²⁰⁷⁰ Kloos 1986, 147, 201; Fabry 1999, 96.

²⁰⁷¹ Kloos 1986, 147, 201.

each verse, strongly suggesting that it was sung. According to Loretz, however, it is one of the youngest psalms in the Psalter.²⁰⁷² If it has been influenced by the Combat Myth, then Babylonian influence is the likeliest.

The psalms mentioning יָם־סוּף suggest that at some point the tradition of the Exodus-narrative was influenced or intermixed with themes of the NWS Combat Myth.²⁰⁷³ Kloos even goes so far as to suggest that in the Yahwistic layer of the narrative, the Reed Sea motif may merely be a historicized version of the battle of the storm-god Baal against Yamm. Wyatt actually questioned whether the epic myths from Ugarit are not the source behind the entire Biblical tradition.²⁰⁷⁴ Formulations such as *ym swp* or *ym sp*,²⁰⁷⁵ however, have not been found in the Ugaritic texts so far, which would at least argue against direct textual borrowing from the Ugaritic material. It bears remarking that the Semitic root *sp* with the meaning of ‘vessel’ or ‘jar’ was borrowed into Late Egyptian as *sp.t*.²⁰⁷⁶ While Ward seemed broadly to favour the semantic relationship of *twf* and *swp*, he admitted that the phonetics involved are difficult, and that it is unlikely that borrowing was done, one way or the other. He also stated in no uncertain terms that because of the initial consonant, the shift from the Egyptian *twf* to the Hebrew *swp* is not possible.²⁰⁷⁷

But whether or not these mythical themes were actually behind the various

²⁰⁷² Loretz 1979, 309–311.

²⁰⁷³ Wyatt 1996, 88; Stoltz 1999, 741.

²⁰⁷⁴ Kloos 1986, 127–212; Wyatt 2005, 39. Also Batto 1983, 30–31.

²⁰⁷⁵ Both biradical and triradical roots have been suggested for the meaning of the word in a variety of Semitic languages. See Lamberty-Zielinski 1974, 191; Ward 1974, 345.

²⁰⁷⁶ This only goes to show that the Semitic sibilant *s* was not rendered with the Egyptian plosive *ṯ*, and one assumes the opposite to be true as well. Ward (1961, 40) noted that the Semitic *s* was usually rendered into Egyptian as *ṣ* and rarely as *s*. When the Egyptian *ṯ* was rendered into other languages, it was usually as *z*. Ward (1974, 347) further remarks that sometimes Semitic *s* was rendered as *ṯ* (=ṣ), but the vocalization speaks against the rendering of *swp* as *twf* in Egyptian. Albright (1928, 232) noted that Hebrew *samek* corresponded to the Egyptian *s* after c. 1000 BCE, but it corresponded to *ṯ* before then. In any case, were *twf* a Semitic loan-word in Late Egyptian, it would do little to clarify the basic meaning of the word in Hebrew. For a bibliography on the correspondences between Egyptian and Semitic sounds, see Albright 1928, 230; 1934, 108.

It must be pointed out that while in Egyptian transliterations the sound *ṣ* (‘tj’, Albright (1928, 232), however, renders it with Semitic *k* in older texts, which was closer to *t* in “Middle Empire” times) is rendered with the letter *ṯ*, in Ugaritic and Aramaic transliterations the same letter is used to render the sound *θ*, corresponding to the Hebrew *ṣ* and Egyptian *ṣ* or *th*. On the “mechanical defect” of lacking a uniform transliteration system, see Ward 1961, 31. This lack of uniform system for the transcription of sounds in ancient languages before the creation of the IPA meant that sometimes authors were not discussing the same things.

²⁰⁷⁷ See Ward 1974, 346–347. I find the transcription less than accurate, as the character *z* may be understood to contain sibilance. If one were to render the Egyptian letter transcribed as *ṯ* into Hebrew, it would resemble the emphatic *ṣ* (usually transcribed as *ṣ*) rather than *ṣ*. This discrepancy between the transcription of Egyptian and Semitic (approximations of) sounds may be the cause of some confusion regarding the issue.

poetic verses which mention the term יַם־סוּף, the redaction and editing of the Biblical verses happened in a much later historical context. The battle between the Mesopotamian creator god and the sea monster may be the likelier mythological background for the verses, as opposed to the battle between the NWS Storm-God and his adversary, the anthropomorphized sea.²⁰⁷⁸ Kloos also suggested that the Reed Sea narrative may be a charter myth, a myth of tribal origins used to legitimize claims in the present day.²⁰⁷⁹ While tribal origins do not seem to be a primary concern of the myth, and the (arguably) original context of the institution of kingship was faded into the background, the narrative may well have functioned as a charter myth for an independent nation in the Post-Exilic era.

The later authors or editors of Biblical poetry, however, may not have been consciously or explicitly aware of these mythological themes and motifs. They may have regarded the narrative as an actual historical event in the past of their ancestors, which would have happened in a geographically definable location, even if the exact location of this place differed from tradition to tradition. According to Hoffmeier, the translators of the Septuagint, for instance, associated יַם־סוּף with the Red Sea because, according to either speculation or the tradition passed down to them, the Red Sea was where the crossing of the people actually took place. He also wonders whether the attempts by Ptolemy II to build a channel from the Gulf of Suez to the Mediterranean Sea (or from the Suez Isthmus to the Red Sea) may have had influence on the Greek translation (namely, as a means of seeking political favour).²⁰⁸⁰ Therefore, one could argue that whatever the historicity of the crossing of the sea narrative may be, it is entirely possible to find mythological influences in the Biblical term יַם־סוּף. The mythological background of the term does not, however, help us understand what it actually factually means.

The Hebrew word סוּפָה, which seems to be derived from the same radicals as the word סוּף (the root סוּף has the meaning of coming to an end, while the noun

²⁰⁷⁸ Both theories have their proponents, but more often than not the traditions are seen as interchangeable. See Fabry 1999, 95–96. On pp. 98–103, he presents a theory according to which the earliest Yahwistic layer would contain a motif familiar from Canaanite mythology, in which the sea is dried up. The language of creation mythology and the cosmological battle of Marduk and Tiamat would have been added to the narrative in the Priestly layer, following the Exile, and the motif of the cleaving of the sea would have come from these later additions. Fabry seems to disregard the fact that *EE* itself is already a text containing motifs “familiar” from “Canaanite mythology” (i.e. the NWS Combat Myth).

²⁰⁷⁹ Kloos 1986, 164, 206.

²⁰⁸⁰ Hoffmeier 1999, 204.

סוף refers to a metaphorical, as well as an actual, end), has the meaning of ‘storm’ or ‘storm wind’.²⁰⁸¹ We find this word used in the HB always in poetic contexts (e.g. in Is. 5:28, 17:13, 21:1, Hos. 8:7, and Am. 1:14). But while “stormy sea” or “sea of storm” could ostensibly be offered as an alternative translation of the term ים-סוף, such an alternative scarcely ever has been discussed in the context – even though the Swiss reformer Jean Calvin hinted at the connection between the two words, סוף and סופה, already in the 16th century.²⁰⁸² Although the sea is not directly referred to as the “stormy sea” in classical sources, we do still find some instances where there are allusions to storms or phenomena associated with storms in connection with the narrative.²⁰⁸³

It may offer support to the suggestion that some classical authors associated the term ים-סוף with storms specifically. Hoffmeier claimed that the סופה-wind was understood to have destructive qualities, and therefore the word would have served as a kind of a word-play for the scene which happened at the ים-סוף.²⁰⁸⁴ Wyatt also found echoes of the whirlwind in the word סוף, and it is worth noting that especially in the Yahwistic layer of the narrative, the wind is often alluded as by the instrument of the cleaving of the sea.²⁰⁸⁵ Interpreting the term through storm imagery also finds some support in the fact that the word סופה is often found in military contexts (e.g. Is. 5:28), where the image of the storm is

²⁰⁸¹ Beyse 1974, 197.

²⁰⁸² Hoffmeier 1999, 204.

²⁰⁸³ Josephus and Pompey Tragus, according to Segert 1994, 199.

²⁰⁸⁴ Hoffmeier 1999, 204. Rather than assuming that we are dealing with the dropping of an archaic suffix in construct form, there might be another possible way of explaining the connection between the words סופה and סוף. We might be dealing with a word that originally had two apparent forms, one appearing feminine and the other masculine. Of these forms, the masculine word for sea would have formed its construct with the masculine-apparent form סוף – even if the word for storm would otherwise have been considered a grammatical feminine. We do have some examples of this kind of unstable or alternating gender of nouns in Semitic languages, especially with regard to natural phenomena. This style of unstable or alternating gender is more typical of archaic Hebrew. McCarter 2008, 54; Alonso Schökel 1988, 82–83; Ben-Asher 1978, 1–14. Examples of this sort of alternation can be found, for instance, in the Hebrew word for ‘river’, נהרות/נהרים, and the Ugaritic word for the ‘deeps’, *thmm/thmt*, or the word ‘day’ *ym*, which has the plurals *ymm* and *ymt*.

The ‘natural’ gender of words does not necessarily have anything to do with their apparent gender, as the two words for male lion, אריה and ארי, demonstrate. In Hebrew, the gender or number of a noun cannot be reliably discerned from its morphology alone. Vance 2004. The possibility of the unstable grammatical gender of the Hebrew noun affecting its interpretation should be seriously considered, because the mythical interpretation of ים-סוף as “Sea of (World’s) End” and the etymologizing Late Egyptian loan in “Reed Sea” seem much more complicated than explaining the term as a reference to a simple natural phenomenon, “stormy sea”, especially as this term may contain an allusion to all the mythological constellations discussed previously

²⁰⁸⁵ Ottosson 1974, 195; Hoffmeier 1999, 214; Wyatt 2005, 49.

used for approaching enemy troops, or even as a synonym of military chariots²⁰⁸⁶ – recalling the pursuing Egyptian armies. Based on Jo. 2:20, סוף also has the specific meaning of the rear-end of an army, which may also have some bearing on the semantic constellation of the יַם־סוּף of the Exodus-narrative.²⁰⁸⁷

It does not seem that the term יַם־סוּף necessarily refers to a specific geographic location – at least as far as we are able to determine. But it could be that the mythical interpretations of the term are also implicit. Even if we were to translate the term as ‘stormy sea’, it may still serve as a reference to the Red Sea or to some specific part of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba being famous for its storms)²⁰⁸⁸ – at least inasmuch as it has been used to refer to that place in later texts. Batto, for his part, came to the conclusion that there is no definite proof in the HB that the term יַם־סוּף referred to any other body of water than the Red Sea and that in every instance it would be possible to interpret יַם־סוּף as referencing the Red Sea.²⁰⁸⁹ This does not mean that it necessarily references the Red Sea in every instance, for the term could also indicate another body of water. It may even be that what is referenced by the term is an archetypal sea or watery body, which could be located anywhere in the ANE – just as Hoffmeier suggested that the term “Reed Sea”, as derived from the Egyptian *p3 twf(y)*, could have pointed to any of the marshy lakes in the Suez Isthmus.²⁰⁹⁰

As Batto pointed out, Hellenistic writers used the name Ερυθρά θάλασσα not only for the Red Sea, but also the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, as well as any other distant and unknown sea.²⁰⁹¹ The direct association of the Red Sea with the Biblical יַם־סוּף does give rise to the question why the exact same body of water – the Red Sea – would have been referred to by two completely different

²⁰⁸⁶ Beyse 1974, 198.

²⁰⁸⁷ The connection of the word סופה, which appears grammatically feminine, and the masculine-apparent word סוף which we find in the actual term יַם־סוּף, presents somewhat of a conundrum. If what we find at the end of the word סופה were a terminative, directive or even a locative ה- (such forms as are familiar to us. from the Ugaritic texts, but examples can also be found in Biblical texts, such as 1 Kgs 4:12 – according to Joosten (2005, 337), it is one of the features shared by the epigraphic Hebrew texts from the 8th to the 6th centuries and the texts of the Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) corpus), then it is possible that such an enclitic ה- might have dropped for reasons of stress in the יַם־סוּף construct. Koehler-Baumgartner offer a locative derivation from the root סוּף for the word סופה. See Koehler & Baumgartner 1995, 747. We might also have an archaic accusative form in סופה. See Gesenius 1856, 158–160. Assuming that the word carried an archaic or superfluous ה- seems unlikely because, while the feminine-apparent word סופה only occurs in very few instances in the HB, it is solely the form סופה that carries the meaning of storm – even in Modern Hebrew.

²⁰⁸⁸ Ottosson 1974, 195.

²⁰⁸⁹ Batto 1983, 28.

²⁰⁹⁰ Hoffmeier 1999, 214.

²⁰⁹¹ Batto 1983, 35. E.g. Müller 1882, map XI.

names (יַם־סוּף and הַיָּם הָאֲדוֹמִים) and why the terms are not equated anywhere in the texts of the HB, especially when referencing archaic place-names alongside their contemporary equivalents seems to have been somewhat of a hobby horse of the authors of several Biblical texts. It is certainly possible that both names reference the same location, at least at some point in history, but the actual textual evidence for such an occurrence seems slim., especially since only two occurrences of the term can be associated with the Biblical Edom: 1 Kgs. 9:26 and Jer. 49:21.²⁰⁹² It is also worth noting that alternation between the forms סוּף and סוּפָה can actually already be found in the texts of the HB (cf. Num. 21:14 and Dt. 1:1). Both verses reference a place-name somewhere in the area of Moab.

In the passage of Dt, the place-name Sūf is located somewhere in the desert east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River, whereas the passage from Num. describes rivers bordering the land of Moab. The archaic geography of Num. 21 may have influenced the description in Dt., because despite the use of the different forms that we find in the two passages (סוּף/סוּפָה), they seem to point to same place, the location of which remains a mystery to the modern reader. There have been very few attempts to locate the יַם־סוּף itself in the area of Moab despite the existence of this place-name in the Biblical text, as it is on the opposite side of Palestine as seen from Egypt, in which direction the narrative of the Exodus has traditionally been linked. What makes trying to locate the יַם־סוּף east of the Dead Sea rather fascinating is Edelman's discussion on the Exodus tradition as an evolving social memory of the Exile, and Wyatt's suggestion that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was actually none other than the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus. This may also offer an explanation to the question of why it is an eastern wind that is mentioned as cleaving the watery masses in the Exodus-narrative, with the east wind symbolizing the Babylonian army.²⁰⁹³

Whether we translate יַם־סוּף as the Reed Sea or the Red Sea, over the years nearly every body of water between the Nile and the Jordan has been proposed as the geographic location of the sea. In addition to physical bodies of water, suggestions have been made that the term may have referred to a celestial sea or to the monstrous mythological sea found in various ANE myths of divine combat. Whichever of the many suggestions actually lies behind the term – or whether the

²⁰⁹² Ottosson 1974, 192.

²⁰⁹³ Ottosson 1974, 195; Wyatt 1996, 87; Huddleston 1992, 634. Edelman 2012, 193: "A message could be given that those living in the Diaspora in Egypt and Babylonia who served the imperial power were slaves to the wrong leader".

term even refers to an as yet unknown alternative – the history of the interpretation of *יָם־סוּר* does suggest that no simple solution can definitively answer the question regarding its final location. Considering all of the verses mentioning the term, it seems somewhat unlikely that they all reference the same location, whether geographic or mythological. In addition to the question of the location of *יָם־סוּר*, the actual meaning of the term remains puzzling. I would like to put forward the possibility of translating it as ‘stormy sea’ – the geographic location of which need not even be specifically defined, as it may reference any and every sea, as need be.

The reason for discussing the etymology of the word within the context of the semantic field of ‘storm’ is the Sumerian term A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA, the meaning of which is ‘angry sea’. Both a raging sea and a stormy sea are fairly ordinary poetic metaphors. If there does exist a connection between the Hebrew term and A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA, the stormy sea (which may or may not have had an Akkadian reading in the Neo-Babylonian period,²⁰⁹⁴ to which the text itself is dated,²⁰⁹⁵ contemporary to the Reed Sea narrative), it may offer solid evidence that, at least within or relating to the construction *יָם־סוּר*, these traces or remnants of the battle-myth tradition in the Exodus-narratives owe more to the Sumero-Babylonian version of the myth than to the NWS one.

The composition of the A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA text (SBH 13) does not offer us a direct textual parallel to the Reed Sea narrative, but it may contain a thematic link to the concept, as the colophon A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA NU.TE.EN.TE.EN (‘the raging sea cannot be calmed’) is attached to a hymn lamenting the destruction of the cities of Nippur and Babylon.²⁰⁹⁶ If the writing of the Exodus-narratives was occasioned by the Exile, then alluding to laments about the destruction of cities may have been extremely topical. There exist several copies of the hymn, so it cannot be that the colophon found its place in the beginning of the hymn by accident. The angry sea and the destruction of cities are somehow connected. The reason why the composition of A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA may have been significant to the Babylonian exiles is that, unlike earlier Neo-

²⁰⁹⁴ Perhaps something to the effect of *tāmtu imḥulli*, lit. ‘sea of the storm-wind’, in which *imḥullu*, the monstrous wind that Marduk uses as his weapon, would be a Sumerian loan word. An Akkadian translation existed for the text from early on, but it has been preserved only in part. There is also indication that the meaning of the Sumerian text may have been somewhat lost on the Akkadian scribes. Kutscher 1975, 27, 30.

²⁰⁹⁵ Kutscher 1975, 6, 11. Kutscher argued that the text may have had an OB origin in the reign of Samsi-Iluna (c. 1749 BCE).

²⁰⁹⁶ Kutscher, 1975, 4.

Sumerian city laments, this particular lament was adapted for use as a standard *balag*, a general lament for the destruction of a city or a temple, to be chanted during ceremonies marking the demolition and rebuilding of temples. The lament of A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA was in fact chanted regularly on certain days of the Assur and Uruk calendars.²⁰⁹⁷ It is certainly something that the Babylonian exiles may (and most likely would) have heard in Babylon, and they may have viscerally connected with it, given the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BCE.²⁰⁹⁸

Keeping in mind the possible Babylonian influences on the Reed Sea narrative, Kutscher also suggested that the A.AB.BA HU.LUH.HA lament was probably not authored in Nippur, but introduced there at a late stage of its development and edited for local use. But the hymn obviously had some connection to Nippur, the city of the storm-god Enlil. According to Kutscher, a version of the text was definitely edited or copied in Babylon or in some other place under Babylonian influence.²⁰⁹⁹ This suggests that alternative versions of the lament may have existed and were circulated in the Neo-Babylonian Empire, such that the connection between the stormy sea and the destruction of cities by the Neo-Babylonian armies was a common tradition.

According to Kutscher, in order to preserve the universal appeal of the lament, all details and allusions to particular events or personages had to be suppressed, so that the lament could be employed as a multiple-use *balag* to be utilized whenever necessary; this was a feature of the poetic Song of the Sea as well.²¹⁰⁰ The use of the term יָם־סוּף in the Reed Sea narratives is the opposite: it was implemented into what the authors regarded as a real historical situation with real historical persons – albeit not necessarily their contemporaries. The context of the lament was the restoration of temples,²¹⁰¹ if the phrase “the angry sea” had been in the minds of the authors of the Reed Sea narrative, it might indeed express a wish for the rebuilding of the temple.

According to Edelman, the narrative of the Exodus provided an “explicit,

²⁰⁹⁷ Kutscher 1975, 6.

²⁰⁹⁸ Nielsen (2012, 7–8), writing in the context of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, pointed out that the scribal elite could not tailor literary-historical propagandistic narratives simply to satisfy the ruler, as in order for the narratives to remain credible they had to use knowledge that existed within the collective memory.

²⁰⁹⁹ Kutscher 1975, 7, 20.

²¹⁰⁰ Kutscher 1975, 7.

²¹⁰¹ Kutscher 1975, 7, 26. According to Kutscher the lament could be used at any temple demolition and rebuilding ceremony as necessary without being adapted anew for each such occasion.

fixed commemorative meaning” to “older, inherited ritual acts and gestures”, which were deemed valuable to the community but whose meaning was no longer completely understood. She suggested that deference to the authority of the “forefathers” guaranteed that the meaning and value of repetitive ritual acts was sustained and that rituals were perpetuated in a society where “a clear sense of meaning” was no longer held by “any living, participating member”. The new commemorative meaning of the narrative then helped forge social cohesion and group identity-building in the Post-Exilic situation.²¹⁰² The Babylonian elements in the Reed Sea narratives and the possible employment of a term recalling a tradition of laments for destroyed cities using the image of the angry sea from the period in question seem to offer us a firm foundation for reading the Exodus-narratives in the context of the Exile.

There are also texts which seem to recall the Exodus tradition that do not mention the Reed Sea explicitly: Pss. 8:9, 66:6 and 78:13 mention the crossing of the by sea using the verb עבר, which may allude to the cleaving of the sea, while Pss. 77:20 and 107:23 refer to cleaving with other formulations. Of these, Ps. 66:6 was examined in section 4.4.

The sea is mentioned three times in Ps. 78:

בָּקַע יָם וַיַּעֲבֹרֵם וַיַּצֵּב מַיִם כְּמוֹ-הָאֵד	78:13	He <i>cleft the sea</i> and caused them <i>cross over</i> , and he made the waters to stand as a heap.
וַיִּמָּטֵר עֲלֵיהֶם כְּעָפָר שָׁמַיִם וַיִּקְהֹל יְאֵיִם עוֹף כָּנָף	78:27	He caused flesh to rain upon them like dust, and winged fowl as the <i>sand of the seas</i> .
וַיְנַחֵם לִבָּטָח וְלֹא פָחַדוּ וְאֶת-אֹיְבֵיהֶם כָּסָה הַיָּם	78:53	And he led them safely and they did not fear, but <i>the sea</i> covered their enemies.

Ps. 78:13, 27, 53 has the Mosaic ‘cleaving of the sea’ motif in its classic form, even though the term *yam sūf* is not mentioned. V. 12 mentions Egypt as the locale, bringing the psalm to the Exodus tradition. The psalm has been interpreted as ‘Davidic propaganda’, even though it is clearly connected to the Exodus tradition.²¹⁰³ The observed Davidic connection of a Post-Exilic psalm may betray an understanding of the context of the motifs as monarchic. In v. 53, the sea covers or overwhelms the enemies. The key vocabulary in the verse is familiar from Ugaritic: *ib* for ‘enemy’ and *ksy* or *kst* for ‘covering (with a cloth)’. The

²¹⁰² Edelman 2012, 180, “Alternatively, even if meaning had existed for a number of the symbolic ritual actions and gestures, their multivocality would have allowed a new layer of association to be added by associating them with the exodus story”.

²¹⁰³ Propp 1987, 29–30.

Hebrew word נָחַץ – a possible cognate to the Ugaritic root – may also carry an association with royal authority, a metaphor for monarchic power. In particular, it has been connected with the theme of the foundation of a kingdom.²¹⁰⁴

In the Exodus tradition, it appears that the people of Israel have replaced the king: as the king walked through the waters in the days of yore, so now do the people of Israel walk through the waters. Ps. 78 is a historical or historiographic psalm, in which historical accounts are narrated using the form of poetry and metaphor. The text recounts the Exodus event which, according to Hossfeld & Zenger, the authors of the psalm would have considered to be an actual historical episode, although it is dressed in later Deuteronomistic language.²¹⁰⁵ According to Propp, the psalm had been the first attempt to associate a historical reality with the tradition of the Song of Moses, found in Dt. 32.²¹⁰⁶ The sea is not anthropomorphized in the passage, and there is nothing to suggest that it should be understood as a monstrous being. In v. 13, the sea is cleft or divided using the verb נָחַץ. Kloos made the observation that the verb appears in this context only in Post-Exilic texts.²¹⁰⁷ The idea of the cleaving of the sea could recall the Babylonian myth.²¹⁰⁸ In the Ugaritic myth, the sea is defeated by clubbing, not cleaving (KTU 1.2 IV 23–24). This is one of the few passages in which the sea is actually and actively cleft, rather than the cleaving merely being alluded to. In v. 27, the sea stands as a pure metaphor.²¹⁰⁹

The rest of the psalm also contains vocabulary found in the Ugaritic texts. V. 15–16 make use of the parallelism of נְהַרֹת and תְּהַמּוֹת, ‘deeps’ and ‘rivers’,²¹¹⁰ which is also a feature of Ps. 18:16.²¹¹¹ Both words are found also in their plural

²¹⁰⁴ Klein 1987, 281; HALOT 1995, 487–488; Brown-Driver-Briggs 2006, 492.

²¹⁰⁵ Hossfeld & Zenger 2005, 285–300.

²¹⁰⁶ Propp 1987, 28–29.

²¹⁰⁷ Kloos 1986, 205.

²¹⁰⁸ The gathering of the “mighty waters” into a heap is also reminiscent of Ninurta’s cleaning up of Kur. In Kramer’s translation: “What had been scattered, he gathered / What by Kur had been dissipated / He guided and hurled into the Tigris / The high waters it pours over the farmland”. The heaping of the waters is also found in Ps. 33:7, Josh. 3:16, and Ex. 15:8. I will discuss it in connection with Ex. 15:8, which is likely the oldest of the passages.

²¹⁰⁹ Note also the shared vocabulary with Josh. 3:16: “That the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, *the Salt Sea*, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho”.

²¹¹⁰ “He cleft rocks in the desert and gave them drink as though out of the Great Deep; he brought out streams from the stone and made a downpour like rivers of water”.

²¹¹¹ The covering of the sea is also found in Josh. 24:7: ““But when they cried out to Yahweh, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought *the sea upon* them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time”.

forms (*nhrm* and *thmtm*) in parallelism in the ritual text KTU 1.100. Propp suggested that the use of the parallelism may have been intended as a “cosmological memory”, alluding to the El-traditions of Ugarit.²¹¹² The parallelism does not necessitate a mythological background, and the word-pair could well have been divorced of its background and historical uses in NWS mytho-religious poetry. However, used here in the context of the miracle at the sea, some mythic connotations are warranted, although no explicit connection to the Ugaritic texts can be established on the basis of this parallelism. While the hybrid Babylonian myth may have influenced the psalm, and the theme of kingship may implicitly be read into the verses, or at least into some of the vocabulary, this sort of interpretation seems much too abstract for drawing conclusions.

Like Ps. 78:13, Ps. 8:9 refers to the idea of the crossing of the sea by using the verb עבר. The sea is mentioned twice in the verse:

צִפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדָגֵי הַיָּם	8:9	The fowl of the heavens and the <i>fish of the sea</i> ,
עֹבֵר אֶרְחוֹת יָמִים		whatsoever <i>crosses the paths of the seas</i> .

The verbal root עבר (here in sg. ptc. form) refers to the idea of crossing, both in a physical and abstract sense. The verb was discussed by Cross in the context of the Combat Myth and the crossing of the Jordan River.²¹¹³ Some commentators, such as Kloos, reject the suggestion that the verb has anything to do with the idea of the splitting of the sea.²¹¹⁴ In Ps. 8:9, the reference to the sea, although a feature of creation, is natural, and therefore the crossing of the paths of the seas may have but the faintest allusion to sea monsters.²¹¹⁵ The verb עבר is cognate with the Akkadian verb *ebēru* (with an alternative form in *ebāru*), which has a similar semantic field of crossing and going to the other side, especially regarding bodies of water. It also has the meaning of stretching over or lying across the waters, including the waters in the sky (i.e. heaven).

What is significant about the use of the verb in the context of the Combat Myth and the royal inscriptions discussed in the next chapter is that verbs such as *ebāru*, *alāku*, *namāsu*, *tuāru* and nouns pertaining to roads like *gerru*, *harrānu*, *hulu* are staples of texts pertaining to the king’s military campaigns. Note already the inscription of Man-Ištušu E2.1.3.1 in the Sargonic period, juxtaposing crossing and the sea: “the cities across the sea” (URU^{ki}.URU^{ki} *a-bar-ti ti-a-am-*

²¹¹² Propp 1987, 30–31.

²¹¹³ Cross 1973, 131.

²¹¹⁴ Kloos 1986, 136.

²¹¹⁵ Craigie 1983a, 108–109, suggested that the psalm might reference Leviathan.

tim). However, the verb *ebēru* has no connotations of cutting in half. The verb used for the splitting of Tiamat in *EE* IV:137 (*iḫ-pi-ši-ma ki-ma nu-nu maš-di-e a-na šinā-šu*, “He split her like a fish in two”) is *ḫepû*, a verb with numerous meanings, such as breaking, crushing, cracking, halving, injuring, dividing, etc., but none of which relate to crossing.²¹¹⁶ It is also extremely difficult to ascertain a link between the idea of the crossing of the sea and the myth of combat against the sea. Kloos argued, however, that it is not important whether the verb ‘to split’ was used, as the idea may be present regardless.²¹¹⁷

The royal inscription of Shalmaneser III (A.0.102.2:10) describes the king continuing to progress by difficult ways *through* mountains and seas: *šá ar-ḫi pa-áš-qu-te DU.DU-ku iš-tam-da-ḫu KUR.MEŠ-e u A.AB.BA.MEŠ*. While it would be easy to read this as a purely geographic description of an event in the physical world, the known mythological connotations of both mountains and the sea are immediately recalled by their juxtaposition. While the reference to the mythology is not explicit, nor is it possible to reach out and discern the motivations and intentions of the scribes using this particular imagery, the possibility that this is a consciously constructed allusion to the Combat Myth cannot be dismissed. But whether the sea is crossed or split or torn asunder, this imagery features in the Babylonian and Assyrian sources, and not in the Amorite traditions of the myth. To the author’s knowledge, until the texts of the HB there is not a single NWS exemplar of the myth in which the sea is split into two parts.

Further on, apart from the idea of the crossing of the sea, Ps. 8:9 seems to be a simple iteration of creation. The natural juxtaposition of “the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea” (*‘šr.šmm wdg bym*)²¹¹⁸ can also be found in Ugaritic literature (KTU 1.23 62–63). In both cases the phrase does have some mythological connotations,²¹¹⁹ but in neither case is the motif of battle present.²¹²⁰

²¹¹⁶ The concept of the halving of the sea in Biblical literature in connection with the battle of Marduk and Tiamat has been discussed, e.g. by Mowinckel 1950, 70; Wakeman 1973, 16–22; Wyatt 2003, 152.

²¹¹⁷ Kloos 1986, 147.

²¹¹⁸ It is unclear whether the Ugaritic text (indirectly) references Yamm or not. The *b*-preposition may be translated as “the fish in the sea” or “the fish by Yamm”. The word *ym* has multiple occasions in the text KTU 1.23, but none of them need necessarily reference Yamm.

²¹¹⁹ De Langhe (1958, 136) suggested that El would first have created the gods of heaven and the gods of the sea, which would have sustained themselves by feasting on the fish and the birds at the beginning of time. The Ugaritic passage above does relate to the appetite of El’s progeny, but I find De Langhe’s assertion somewhat too fantastic.

²¹²⁰ Albeit Craigie (1983a, 108–109) suggested that “those who cross the paths of the sea” may have contained mythological sea monsters in addition to normal marine fauna – perhaps even referring to Leviathan. I can find no textual reason to assume this. According to Benz 2013,

The reading of mythological monsters into Ps. 8:9 seems somewhat tendentious. However, the psalm does concern the kingship of Yahweh, and v. 6 may allude to the king's sharing of Yahweh's kingship: *תַּמְשִׁילֶהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כֹּל שִׁתָּה תַחַת-רַגְלָיו*: “You [Yahweh] have given him dominion over all the deeds of your hands, everything you have established under his feet”. The “whosoever crosses” of v. 9 is included in the list of things that Yahweh set under the feet of the man, who could well be understood as representing the Davidic king. And if the hands of Yahweh are understood as the divine weapons, then the psalm could be understood as weakly paralleling the sentiment of Ps. 89:26, in which Yahweh sets a pair of hands upon the sea. However, it does not seem as though the motif of the subjugation of the sea was explicitly recalled by the author.

The Exodus tradition also may underlie Ps. 114, which also features a parallelism between the sea and a river (the Jordan), although the word ‘river’ is not mentioned in it. Both the sea and the Jordan are portrayed anthropomorphically and are clearly personified:²¹²¹

הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסָּב לְאַחֲוֹר	114:3	The Sea saw it and fled, The Jordan turned backward.
מִה-לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תִנּוֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסָּב לְאַחֲוֹר	114:5	What is with you that you flee, O Sea? O Jordan, that you turn backwards?

The psalm is short, which is why it is thought to be ancient. Linguistically it also features aspects of ancient poetic Hebrew, such as a stringent parallelism, use of the preterit form, and the lack of consecutive verbal forms.²¹²² The repetition in the psalm may also indicate that it was meant to be sung or recited. The vocabulary is likewise old: the verb *sb* is known from Ugaritic with the meaning of turning, as is the verb *ns*, which has multiple meanings, some of which are closely associated with the warrior and the subjugation of enemies.²¹²³ The psalm also mentions the jumping and skipping of mountains and hills; this is also a feature of Ps. 29, which has often been regarded as one of the oldest psalms, as well as one most likely to contain NWS influences.²¹²⁴

137, they are paralleled also in KTU 1.23, where they constitute a natural merism which intends to depict the “overwhelming size” of the character described – possibly *tnn*.

²¹²¹ The sea in the verses features the article *-ה*. Wakeman (1973, 96) submitted that when the article is included, the sea cannot be understood as a proper name. To the contrary, it is because of the article and the coupling of the word with the proper name Jordan which suggests that this is one of the passages in which reading the word as the proper name of a personified natural phenomenon may not be out of place.

²¹²² Dahood 1970, 134; Propp 1987, 24.

²¹²³ Klein 1987, 409, 432; HALOT 1995, 681, 738–739; Brown-Driver-Briggs 2006, 630–631, 685–686.

²¹²⁴ This view was opposed by Avishur 1994, 25–26, although he did admit that the psalm may

Ps. 114 was connected to the theme of kingship (e.g. by Dahood). According to him, the entire psalm is constructed around the idea that Yahweh has chosen Palestine as his holy kingdom. There have also been attempts to connect the psalm with the Reed Sea tradition. Stoltz, for example, submitted that in it the waters of the river Jordan are cut in half and dried up like the Reed Sea.²¹²⁵ There does not appear to be anything in the text of the psalm itself to suggest that the river is either cut or dried up, unless we interpret the poetic metaphor of fleeing waters literally. Neither is there anything in the psalm to explicitly connect it with the Exodus-tradition – unless the fleeing waters are interpreted as making way for dry land. Cross, for his part, connected the parallelism of sea and river reminiscent of Canaanite mythology to the context of the cult of Gilgal.²¹²⁶ Loretz & Kottsieper submitted that the background of the psalm is a historicized song describing Baal-Yahweh as a weather-god, the core of which harks back to the Canaanite era.²¹²⁷ Their main thesis may well be correct, but there does not appear to be any historicizing or depersonification in the text. Propp, on the other hand, connected the psalm to the Ugaritic texts and to the parallelism of sea and river to the Ugaritic Prince Sea, Judge River.²¹²⁸

The fact that the sea is paralleled by the Jordan specifically may indicate that we are dealing with an authentic local Palestinian tradition. If the water courses of the Eastern Mediterranean were associated with mythological beings and connected to myths of combat (as discussed in section 5.1.4), Jordan is the name one would expect to find as the adversary of the Storm-God in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The main water courses in the Palestinian area are Yarmouk, Qishon, Yabboq, Tirza, Yarqon, Soreq, and Besor (in addition to the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, and the Jordan). The water courses nearest to the city of Jerusalem are the *nahals* Qidron, Refa'im and Soreq.

Note that Rahab is the only monster in the lists found in the HB not found in the Ugaritic example, which seems to catalogue the greatest water courses in the Eastern Mediterranean and Syrian area, suggesting that we are dealing with an adopted tradition. Even if some of the names had changed completely over the course of the centuries, one would expect to find at least some of them mentioned

contain quotations of earlier texts. Avishur's view was opposed by Loretz 2002, 403–420.

²¹²⁵ Stoltz 1999, 740. Discussed by Loretz 1979, 179–181.

²¹²⁶ Cross 1973, 112–144. Discussed by Loretz 1979, 181.

²¹²⁷ Loretz 1979, 490; Loretz & Kottsieper 1987, 76–80.

²¹²⁸ Propp 1987, 24. Discussed by Loretz 1979, 182.

in a native list of this kind. If Rahab is to be understood as a reference to the Nile, then all of the monsters in the lists of the HB refer to hostile nations via their main water courses. But while there are traditions connected to the Jordan that pertain to its crossing and which were merged early on with the traditions of the crossing of the Red Sea, independent traditions of a god's combat with Jordan appear to be lacking. While the psalm does appear to contain some very old material, it is possible that it presents a convergence of traditions.

While there may be broad thematic parallels between the Reed Sea narrative and the Ugaritic texts, a textual link between them is tenuous at best. The phrase יָמִים־רַחֲבִים does not appear in the Ugaritic text corpus. If there are traces of the Amorite Combat Myth in these texts, they were most likely adopted through the hybrid Babylonian tradition during and after the Exile, owing influence to *EE*. But the Biblical texts using the hybrid Babylonian myth are still extremely important with regard to the later uses of the Combat Myth in the Biblical texts, and the transformation of the old NWS political mythology used as a foundational myth in the polities of the Eastern Mediterranean for constructing a new national myth as a part of a conscious ideological programme. Other texts in which Babylonian rather than NWS influence may be observed are those which seem to reference Mesopotamian royal inscriptions.

6.4.2 Mesopotamian Royal Inscriptions²¹²⁹

This chapter discusses the witnesses of the royal inscriptions from the Assyrian and Babylonian area. What they offer us is a concurrent evolution of the motif of the Combat Myth. Whereas in the NWS area the motifs of the Amorite myth were embedded in mythology and cultic poetry, becoming abstract and symbolic with regard to the concrete concept of the legitimation of power as time went by, in the Assyrian and Babylonian area it was explicitly forged into a non-mythological facet of the royal ideology and carved into stone in the many royal inscriptions in the area. The object of royal inscriptions was to present the monarchs as perfect kings. They employed a style of composition that remained similar throughout the

²¹²⁹ For the texts, their exemplars, and bibliographical information on the texts discussed in this chapter, cf. RIME, RIMA, and RINAP. Note that each text is an edition of an inscription of the Annals text, and that several copies (or exemplars) of the text may have existed.

centuries, even though the details changed from king to king.²¹³⁰ In literary compositions the laudatory parts often employed a poetic or semi-poetical style mixed with prose narrative, using certain stock phrases from “which every scribe could draw when composing a laudatory inscription”, which may have only loosely corresponded with historical realities.²¹³¹

Apart from the genre, the most significant difference between royal inscriptions and royal hymns (a few of which I have also discussed), is their dating. Royal inscriptions purport to offer contemporary witnesses to their subject, the immediacy of which is retained through faithful reproduction, even in later copies. Royal hymns, on the other hand, were recited in the scribal schools, sometimes centuries after their subject had expired; there is no accounting for changes in composition from the genesis of a hymn to the time that it was committed to writing.²¹³² There was also necessarily a congruence between the authors of the inscriptions and the will of the establishment, or else the inscriptions would not have been preserved in the foundation deposits,²¹³³ while such congruence need not have existed for hymns written after the death of a monarch.

Mesopotamian royal inscriptions were openly ideological, meant to impress their virtues on conquered and hostile nations, subsequent kings, the gods, and to some extent, the people.²¹³⁴ While the connection between royal inscriptions and poetically constructed mythological texts may escape the intuitive understanding of modern readers, the association of the genres was famously established by Hallo and Frayne, although mostly in the context of Sumerian

²¹³⁰ Talon (2005b, 102) approached the texts as individual, particular compositions. While each text certainly deserves to be examined as an entity of its own, there are common themes and even shared phrases in the inscriptions, making the texts a combination of unique and traditional elements. Discussing deviations from the standard annals, Talon submitted that “if the author decided (and was permitted) to deviate from the usual way of describing events, he had perfectly good reason for doing it”.

²¹³¹ This was true not only of Mesopotamian inscriptions, but also Egyptian royal inscriptions. See Yeivin 1934, 228, for a deconstruction of the Egyptian style. The Egyptian style, however, following the Empire period, may also have borrowed stock phrases from the Mesopotamian inscriptions. This was only natural, as many of scribes involved in the making of these inscriptions were “of the local scribes of the ‘colonial’ service”.

²¹³² Brisch 2010, 153ff; Tadmor 1997. For bibliography on the topic of the scribes of royal inscriptions, see Talon 2005b, 102.

²¹³³ Talon 2005b, 103. “A kind of *imprimatur* had to be given for each version of the annals. And thus, when a version deviates from the usual format, or when a special topic is developed, it must be a message, a response to a precise political or religious situation”.

²¹³⁴ Talon 2005b, 100. Explicitly they were addressed to subsequent rulers, but Talon ascribes the gods as their “ultimate audience”. See Postgate 1995 for general discussion on Mesopotamian royal ideology.

poetry. While Hallo's suggestion – that royal hymns were composed to honour the very same events that royal inscriptions were intended to record – may have been too straightforward, Frayne's conclusion – that definite connections between the genres exist – seems more plausible.²¹³⁵ The comparison between poetic texts and royal inscriptions is warranted. In the Biblical record, stock phrases of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions can be found, particularly in poetic texts.

It is the opinion of the author that both the royal inscriptions and the hymns (among which Biblical poetry can be counted) are manifestations of the same ideology, as expressed through different genres (and media). While the genres express the ideas in particular ways, the ideological content is the same: legitimization of power and established rule. Overt traces or references to the NWS Combat Myth are not the only places in the Biblical texts where the Combat Myth is found in connection with the institution of monarchy. Another major witness to this mythology is provided by texts which seem to owe influence to the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, whether directly or indirectly (as discussed in the following sections). I will begin with the inscriptions in which the use of the Combat Myth is first attested.

6.4.2.1 Sargon and Naram-Sin: From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea

I have discussed Sargon's influence on the formation of the Combat Myth in previous chapters. It bears repeating that most of the sources on the Sargonic legends do not date to his time, but are considerably later, most from the Neo-Assyrian period, when the Neo-Assyrian dynasties abandoned Middle Assyrian royal ideologies and adopted older traditions to bolster their claims to power. Even the autobiographical text fragments that may come from Sargon's authentic royal inscriptions are later scribal copies. The form of literature that evolved around the personalities of Sargon and his grandson Naram-Sin, called *narû*-literature following Güterbock,²¹³⁶ has been surveyed by Westenholz (1983). Furthermore, the conscious propagandistic and political literary activity by the Akkadian Sargonids is highly probable in light of the fact that the first named

²¹³⁵ Hallo 1963; 1970; Frayne 1981.

²¹³⁶ Güterbock 1934, 19–20, 77–79. This literature was a type of fictional autobiography carved on steles and emulating the style of authentic royal inscriptions.

author in all of human history was Sargon's own daughter, Enheduanna.²¹³⁷ The historicity of the Sargonic narratives is not the focus of my inquiry, however, but rather the effect of the legends on the formation of the NWS Combat Myth.²¹³⁸

Most of the texts pertaining to Sargon and Naram-Sin which I discuss in this chapter are lapidary inscriptions, but there also exist several (non-contemporary) legends or narrative epics written about them.²¹³⁹ The Sargon narratives include *Birth of Sargon*, *Sargon the Conqueror*, and *Sargon King of Battle*. The Naram-Sin legends are *Naram-Sin and The Enemy Horde*, *Naram-Sin and the Great Revolt*, and *Naram-Sin and Erra*.²¹⁴⁰ While the legends mostly use these figures in much later times to comment on contemporary issues and events,²¹⁴¹ in the Sargonic legends the king's life was connected to water in a number of ways.²¹⁴² Nielsen pointed out that the literary traditions around the figures of Sargon and Naram-Sin may have had very little basis in the actual exploits of the kings, but were composed as scribal inventions meant to influence contemporary holders of the throne²¹⁴³ – and, one assumes, also to instruct them.

According to Wyatt, Sargon's washing of the weapon in the sea was a "widespread formulation of complete victory", the king having symbolically reached the ends of the world.²¹⁴⁴ According to the Sumerian King List (SKL), Sargon's reign lasted for 56 years and the Sargonic dynasty for 142 years, meaning that there was ample time for profound ideological changes to take

²¹³⁷ Sasson 2005, 223.

²¹³⁸ Some of the issues examined here have also been discussed by Rollinger (2012) and I have added footnotes to his paper where appropriate, but upon many occasions we have reached the same conclusions independently – which should only serve to strengthen the conclusions. The focus of Rollinger's examination is the persistence of Mesopotamian traditions, regarding which he uses the sea in royal inscriptions as a case-example. While I disagree with him on some details, I do broadly agree with his position on the persistence of the tradition. He has a narrow scope with a broad focus, while my own focus is limited, but with a much wider scope. Also, in the interest of academic integrity, I have had the chance to discuss these concepts with him on a few occasions.

²¹³⁹ For editions of the texts, see Westenholz 1997.

²¹⁴⁰ Sasson 2005, 221.

²¹⁴¹ Nielsen 2012, 5: "[...] these texts should be viewed first and foremost as sources for the period in which they were composed or copied, reflecting the current concerns of the author or copyist, and not as sources about the past that they claim to describe".

²¹⁴² Compare this with the description of Moses in Sabo 2014, 409: "Moses, perhaps more than any other biblical character, is intimately associated with water. It plays an important role in his birth story, and also, in an odd and oblique way, his premature death. In between, water shows up at important stages in his life".

²¹⁴³ Nielsen 2012, 5.

²¹⁴⁴ Wyatt (2001, 116; 1998, 884–885), in which he claimed to follow Durand 1993, 57. Wyatt pointed out that it was not required for Sargon to have actually believed to have reached the ends of the world for the symbolism to have had an impact. In my opinion, the crucial factor was that he was presented as having reached it, whether or not the people factually believed it.

place.²¹⁴⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that the Sargonic legends were popular hundreds upon hundreds of years after his death.²¹⁴⁶ While the details of Sargon's life and reign are shrouded in mystery, the various questions surrounding his character have been thoroughly examined by Lewis in *The Sargon Legend* (1980). In one of the legends, Sargon makes a campaign to the Mediterranean, and it seems that he was indeed the first Mesopotamian king to have made a military incursion there.²¹⁴⁷ He is also found washing his weapon in the sea in his standard royal inscription,²¹⁴⁸ which has been preserved both in Akkadian and in Sumerian (although as later copies).²¹⁴⁹ A noteworthy detail is that the inscriptions were originally featured on triumphal steles in the courtyard of the Ekur-temple of the storm-god Enlil in Nippur.²¹⁵⁰

Paralleling the Mosaic birth narrative (Ex. 1), Sargon was also thought to have been cast into the river by his mother, as he was born illegitimately. In the Sargon Birth Legend,²¹⁵¹ the river carries Sargon to Akki, “the drawer of water”, who then adopts him and raises him as his son, until he grows up to become the cup-bearer of Ur-Zababa, king of Kish.²¹⁵² Both the rescue from the river and the adoption are paralleled in the Mosaic narrative.²¹⁵³ I have covered the concept of the Reed Sea in Mosaic narratives in the previous chapter, and here I reiterate my position that the Mosaic narratives in the HB seem to owe more to Babylonian influence than to NWS traditions. What affinity Mosaic narratives

²¹⁴⁵ While the SKL likewise claims that Naram-Sin had likewise ruled for 56 years, this does not accord with the dynastic total (Frayne 1993, 84). This may be an indication of the wholesale adoption of Sargonic symbols by Naram-Sin or the application of Sargonic symbols to Naram-Sin by the later authors. Frayne, however, seemed to think that the Naram-Sin tradition is more authentic on the basis of the fact that there is more documentation of Naram-Sin's reign than Sargon's.

²¹⁴⁶ Malamat (1965, 373) writes that the expeditions of the rulers of the OB period were “doubtless” a source of inspiration for poets and narrators. Rollinger 2012, 275, writes that Sargon and Naram-Sin “became model kings, focus points of orientation, in the negative as well as the positive”.

²¹⁴⁷ Malamat 1965: 365, 367. However, Yahdun-Lim's campaign to the Mediterranean is the first of which we have primary evidence, as Sargon's campaigns are known through OB tablet copies, and those of the subsequent Sargonic kings were likely at least partially copied from his.

²¹⁴⁸ Usually this corresponds to the ‘master text’ of the RIM-series, often the text numbered X.x.x.1. While the exemplars of the standard inscriptions are fairly uniform, there are minor variants, which are listed in the critical apparatus to the series.

²¹⁴⁹ Malamat 1998: 25–26. The standard inscription of Sargon is mostly known from OB tablet copies.

²¹⁵⁰ Frayne 1993, 9.

²¹⁵¹ Chavalas 2006, 22–25. The text is known from three Neo-Assyrian and one Neo-Babylonian copies.

²¹⁵² For inversions of the Sargonic narrative in the character of Moses, compare this with the discussion of the name of Moses as “the one who draws out” (from water) in Sabo 2014, 416.

²¹⁵³ The parallelism in the stories was explored by Redford 1967.

have to the NWS Combat Myth is most likely due to the shared aspects of the Sumero-Babylonian Combat Myth and the NWS one derived from the Amorite traditions, while none of the particular features of the NWS tradition can be discerned from the Mosaic narratives. One could speculate on whether these aspects of Sargon are later found in the figure of Moses, informed by the latter's role as the 'anti-king'; the figure of Moses, it seems, possesses all of the symbolic aspects of a king but at the same time is emphatically *not* a king, transcending or subverting the role.²¹⁵⁴

In one of his royal inscriptions Sargon washes his weapon in the (Lower) sea as well,²¹⁵⁵ although it is possible that in this context "the sea that is below" (*tâmtu šaplîtu*) could literally refer to a sea which WAS below (the weapon), and we need not insist that it refer to the Persian Gulf any more than as a play on words. Tsumura discussed the connection of the Upper sea with the supercaelian sea (compare with Hebrew מַיִם שְׁמַיִם 'heavens' as 'waters that are above'),²¹⁵⁶ the sea of ANE cosmology located above the skies with the Lower sea representing the subterranean waters.²¹⁵⁷ Mostly, however, it is the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian gulf which are understood by the terms.²¹⁵⁸ But the text that Malamat quotes in ANET²¹⁵⁹ (BM 26 472 i 1 – iv 44) does not actually seem to mention the

²¹⁵⁴ Even the very name of Moses (*vis-à-vis* the Egyptian word *ms/mss* with the meaning 'child' or 'son') seems like a word-play on the name David ('Beloved'), which is especially interesting if David is to be interpreted as a royal epithet, not to mention on the name Sargon ('Legitimate King') itself, functioning as its antithesis. Sabo (2014, 416) argued that the name of Moses contains "traces of Egyptian etymology, but is explained by a Hebrew pun".

²¹⁵⁵ The Lower sea, according to Malamat 1998, 25–26.

²¹⁵⁶ The connection between *šamê* 'heaven' and *ša mē* 'of water' was already made by the Babylonians (e.g. in K 170 + Rm 520: 6', a mystical explanatory text meant for the eyes of scholars only). See Livingstone 1986, 32. While not necessarily a metacultural conception, the idea of the skies containing water akin to the oceans makes for a comprehensible primitive cosmology. Caution must be used, however, in ascribing these beliefs to the ancients, as the Egyptians and the Babylonians especially were known to have made keen astronomical observations. See, for example, Day (1985, 4): "[...] the archaic world view shared by the ancient Israelites along with other peoples of the ancient near east that both above the domed firmament of heaven and below the earth there is a cosmic sea. Rain was regarded as having its origins in the cosmic sea above the firmament and coming down through the windows of heaven, while the world's seas and lakes were thought of as connected with the subterranean part of the cosmic sea". There is a distinction to be made between texts containing traditions and the authors of the texts or the communities in which the texts were traded as personally holding beliefs which may have harked back centuries.

²¹⁵⁷ See Albright (1932, 191), where he discussed the ocean above, where the rain comes from, and the fresh-water ocean below. He dubs both of these *tehôm*, most likely on accident – although on p. 196 he mentions the "upper and lower *tehôm* of later Jewish cosmology". Kloos 1986 suggested that the upper ocean was actually called *mabbûl* in Hebrew.

²¹⁵⁸ Tsumura 1989, 151. Tsumura also discussed the connection of this conception to the divine name *šmm-w-thm* ('the heaven and the deep', KTU 1.100:1) of the Ugaritic texts, the two bodies of water having been represented as a divine couple, where *thmt* is the female counterpart of the male divinity *šmm*.

²¹⁵⁹ The text that he refers to is clearly the one on p. 267 of ANET, even though he cites p. 427 in

Lower sea, merely the sea (A.AB.BA-ka / *ina ti-a-am-tim*).²¹⁶⁰ It may be implied in the line “(he) defeated its territory from Lagash as far as the sea, his weapon he washed in the sea”, but it is not explicitly mentioned. In the text AfO 20 40 vii 31, we find the text *kakkīšu in tâmtim* Ì.LUH (rendered from ^{gis}TUKUL-*kí-šu in ti-a-am-tim* Ì.LUH), “his weapon in the sea he washed”, which does not mention the Lower sea.²¹⁶¹

In the same text, it is mentioned that it was the storm-god Enlil who gave Sargon the Upper sea and the Lower sea as his dominion (E2.1.1.1. 67–85).²¹⁶² This is also followed directly by mention of his conquest of Mari and Elam. The washing of the weapon is also mentioned in E2.1.1.1:50–52.²¹⁶³ Ditto E2.1.1.2., which adds a curse (l. 120–131): “As for anyone who sets aside this statue [N.B.: the text is on a tablet copy], may the god Enlil set aside his name and smash his weapon; may he not walk before the god Enlil”, suggesting that Sargon had in fact ‘walked before’ the god Enlil. The inscription also claims to have been written in front of or before the eyes of Lugal-zage-si, Sargon’s predecessor (IGI LUGAL.ZÀ.GE.SI-šè). E2.1.1.13 features the giving of the Upper sea and the Lower sea to Sargon by Enlil. The colophon of E2.1.1.6. claims to have been written on the ‘shoulder’ (MURGU) of Lugal-zage-si. The noteworthy aspect here is that in his inscriptions, Sargon frequently used the name of Lugal-zage-si, the sole king of the third dynasty of Uruk; by openly using the name of the established king, he legitimated his rule.

There may exist texts in which the “Lower sea” *is* mentioned, but it is not mentioned in these particular texts. In fact, it seems that it was Sargon’s grand-son Naram-Sin, whose name translates to “Beloved of the Moon-god”, who specifically claimed to have washed his weapon in the Lower sea: ^{gis}TUKUL-*kí-*

Malamat 1998, 26.

²¹⁶⁰ The Lower sea is mentioned twice in subsequent lines (l. 9 and 13), but not in this context.

²¹⁶¹ The text is preserved in four OB tablets; Sumerian in RIME 2.1.1.1:50–52: ^{gis}TUKUL-ni A.AB.BA-ka Ì.LUH; Akkadian in RIME 2.1.1.1:56–58: ^{gis}TUKUL-*kí-šu in ti-a-am-tim* Ì.LUH, RIME 2.1.1.2:59–61: ^{gis} TUKUL-*kí-šu in ti-a-am-tim* Ì.LUH, RIME 2.1.1.3:44–46: ^{gis}TUKUL’ [-*kí-šu*] ‘in’ [*ti-a-am-tim*] Ì.[LUH]. All of the texts are later copies, but they may be based on an inscription or inscriptions dating back to Sargon’s time.

²¹⁶² A.BA.BA IGI.NIM-ma-ta A.AB.BA SIG.SIG-šè ^dEN.LÍL-le MU.NA.SUM ù A.AB.BA SIG.SIG-ta DUMU.DUMU AG.GE.DÉ^{ki} NAM.ÉNSI MU.KIN / *ti-a-am-tám a-lí-tám ù ša-píl-tám* ^dEn-líl i-dì-nu-šum₆ *is-tum-ma ti-a-am-tim ša-píl-tim* DUMU.DUMU *a-ka-dē*^{ki} ENSI-kus-a-tim u-ka-lú.

²¹⁶³ ^{gis}TUKUL-ni A.AB.BA-ka Ì.LUH / ^{gis}TUKUL-*kí-šu in ti-a-am-tim* Ì.LUH. This directly follows his conquest of Lagash “as far as the sea”. The washing of the weapon is also featured in E2.1.1.3.

śu4 i[n] ti-a-am-tim śa-pil-tim Ì.LUH.²¹⁶⁴ The “sea that is below” may be a more appropriate translation in Naram-Sin’s case, as the later king would hardly have admitted in his royal inscription of having failed to accomplish something that his grandfather had managed: namely, having conquered only one of the seas. Frayne theorized that the Naram-Sin text may originally have been copied from a stele Sargon had placed in the temple of the storm-god Enlil at Nippur.²¹⁶⁵

The Upper sea and Lower sea are mentioned in connection with Sargon in the same text, where it is mentioned that it was the storm-god Enlil who gave Sargon the seas. While the historical basis of these narratives is somewhat questionable, it does remain that in later times these narratives were connected to Sargon, who was considered an exemplary king of old – a model on which later kings could base their kingships, both regarding the symbols of monarchic rule as well as the narrative of kingship. The enduring popularity of Sargon’s example is evidenced by the fact that Sargonic legends were popular hundreds upon hundreds of years after his death, all the way to the time of the writing of the HB texts. Nabonidus, who based much of his royal propaganda on the Neo-Assyrian kings, who in turn had used the figure of Sargon in the legitimation of his own authority, even seems to have conducted archaeological excavations at Sargon’s palaces.²¹⁶⁶

Rollinger submitted that through their inscriptions referencing the washing of the weapon in the sea: “Sargon and his successors became part of the later Mesopotamian tradition”.²¹⁶⁷ What I suggest is that Sargon’s figure is inexorably linked with the very *formation* of the tradition. While Sargon had to legitimate his rule by using existing traditions, as evidenced by his apparent borrowing from Lugal-zage-si’s inscriptions, in a sense Sargon transcended and transformed the tradition. His successors did not legitimate their rules by borrowing from Lugal-zage-si or any king preceding Sargon; they did it by basing their inscriptions on the figure and legend of Sargon himself. Grayson writes:

The royal inscriptions of Šamši-Adad I mark a major change in style and content as is to be expected from the political and cultural transformation of the old city-state of Assur during this period. Assur now became one of several city-states ruled by this king, who introduced into it foreign and particularly Sumero-Babylonian customs.²¹⁶⁸

²¹⁶⁴ RIME 2.1.4.3:29–32.

²¹⁶⁵ Frayne 1993, 9; followed by Rollinger 2012, 275. Note that the name of the city of Nippur is written EN.LÍL^{ki}, witnessing to the reverence of the Storm-God in the city.

²¹⁶⁶ Oates 1979, 162; Talon 2005b, 101. Chavalas 2006, 22: “It is a testament to Sargon’s greatness that, even a millennium and a half after the era bearing his name, he remains the principal character of legends with widespread currency”.

²¹⁶⁷ Rollinger 2012, 726.

²¹⁶⁸ Grayson 1987, 47.

Several of Šamši-Adad's inscriptions are from Mari and Terqa (A.0.39.4–8) specifically. It is probably for this same reason that Šamši-Adad erected a temple for Enlil in the city of Assur, using the symbols and language of the earlier Sargonic kings in the construction of his own world Empire. Šamši-Adad, however, does not claim to have conquered the sea; he merely insinuates it, as he likely had no physical presence on the coastal area.

It is assumed (e.g. by Wyatt and Rollinger)²¹⁶⁹ that the sea in which the weapon was washed was the Persian Gulf. Rollinger suggested that the tradition was moved by subsequent kings to the shore of the Mediterranean (which “represented a natural Western borderline of any king's sweeping pretensions”). While an original washing at the Persian Gulf may be *inferred* from Sargon's itinerary (he conquered Ur, Eninmar and its regions, and from Lagash to the sea; RIME 2.1.1.1: 44–49), I do not find it necessary to assume that an actual or a ritual washing of his weapon ever took place. The metaphoric content of the phrase ought also to be considered (‘I washed my weapon in the sea’ could simply mean ‘my armies reached the sea coast’). We also have no knowledge of when the Sargon inscription was composed: whether it was written before the completion of his campaign to the west or even after his reign.

Rollinger held that the washing of the weapon in the sea mentioned both in Sargon and Naram-Sin's inscriptions was an actual ritual performed by both kings on the shore of the Persian Gulf.²¹⁷⁰ He also discussed the rituals which he believes that Yahdun-Lim, Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III performed on the shore of the Mediterranean, going so far as to claim that they made sacrifices “on the same spot”, and that the ritual “was transferred from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea”.²¹⁷¹ We do not know where precisely these kings would have made their sacrifices, if indeed any sacrifices were made, but it was Sargon's conquest of the Mediterranean coast that became the model for the successive kings. In Shalmaneser's inscriptions, the location of the sacrifices is different from exemplar to exemplar. In some it is in the Sea of Nairi and not on the Mediterranean, in some it is on the Mediterranean and not on the Sea of Nairi, and in A.0.102.9 50' the sacrifices and the washing of the weapons actually take place

²¹⁶⁹ Wyatt 2001, 116; Rollinger 2012, 275–276.

²¹⁷⁰ Rollinger 2012, 725.

²¹⁷¹ Rollinger 2012, 729–730.

at the source of the Euphrates.²¹⁷²

I would go only so far as to submit that a ritual may be *implied* by the inscriptions, but they hardly offer us historical evidence for its performance. The evidence is problematic, because Naram-Sin's inscription is most likely modelled after an older inscription, possibly Sargon's, which is no longer extant. The Sargon inscriptions are also later copies, and we have no way of knowing how accurately they record the presumed original inscription. Furthermore, we do not know exactly what is meant by the phrase in the inscriptions. The phrase can be interpreted literally and metaphorically, but neither interpretation *necessitates* that performance of a ritual was implied, that a ritual accompanied the act, or that the act was interpreted ritually. Rollinger claims that

[t]he ritual of washing the weapons in the sea is obviously connected to the king's claim of world dominion. This claim is bound on the idea that the shores of the sea represent the ends of the known world, as well as on the conception that the kings of Agade ruled the world 'from the Upper to the Lower Sea'.²¹⁷³

He also described the rituals performed on the shore as "celebrating the far-reaching expansion of their royal power".²¹⁷⁴

This is surely the implied *subtext* of the inscriptions, although the claim of having conquered the areas from the Upper sea to the Lower sea conveys the idea of world domination better than the washing of weapons. It is also noteworthy that the kings of Agade were, factually speaking, the first rulers to extend their dominion from the Lower sea to all the way to the Upper sea, however temporarily. Rollinger submitted that the ambition of expanding empires "as far as the end of the world and to document this endeavour by rituals and artificial landmarks is for sure an ANE tradition".²¹⁷⁵ This is a bold claim, as we have little evidence of this ambition among Mesopotamian kings before Sargon. Furthermore, the trait is hardly limited to ANE kings; one need only look at Spanish Conquistadors, the British Empire, or modern space exploration.

What remains is that the Lower sea or the Persian Gulf is not *explicitly* referenced in Sargon's inscriptions, only the sea. Furthermore, Naram-Sin's modification of the phrase of the Sargon inscriptions may suggest that Sargon's sea was different from Naram-Sin's sea, which also does not necessitate that

²¹⁷² *ina* SAG ÍD *e-ni* ^{ID} A.RAD *al-lik* UDU.SISKUR.MEŠ *a-na* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ni-ia* *aš-bat* ^{GIS} TUKUL.MEŠ *aš-sur ina lib-bi ú-lil*, and in the source of the Tigris (where the washing of the weapons, erection of the stele, and the sacrifices are accompanied with a banquet) in A.O.102.14:69: *a-di* SAG ÍD *e-ni* ^{ID} HAL.HAL.

²¹⁷³ Rollinger 2012, 725–726.

²¹⁷⁴ Rollinger 2012, 725–726.

²¹⁷⁵ Rollinger 2012, 732.

Naram-Sin physically washed his weapon in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, we must consider the different profiles of the Eastern Mediterranean coast and the Persian Gulf. The shore of the Persian Gulf is marshland. It makes little sense to take one's armies through such difficult terrain to the coast of the sea when there was little in the way of urban habitation south of Ur to conquer, nor any notable resources to be claimed from nature. It has been suggested that Sargon attempted to establish the mythical boundaries of the known world through his conquest of these peripheral regions, but we should not forget that at the end of the day he was a conqueror, not a cartographer. In any case, the subsequent rulers associated the washing of the weapons with the Mediterranean Sea.

It is also possible that the Naram-Sin text contrasts the Upper sea (Sum. A.AB.BA IGI.NIM.MA) and the Lower sea (A.AB.BA SIG) with little regard to historical occurrence; it was by that king's time it became a stereotyped narrative trope or a ritually petrified formula,²¹⁷⁶ perhaps one which indeed originated in the time of Sargon or his predecessor and older contemporary Lugal-zage-si.²¹⁷⁷ Lugal-zage-si seems to have been the first king to unite the Sumerian city-states under single rule, and he is believed either to have made a small raid to the Mediterranean coast or to have exaggerated his conquests by claiming to have done so. The phrase does not appear in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions prior to him.

Note that in the Lugal-zage-si vase inscription from the weather-god Enlil's shrine at Nippur (RIME 1.14.20.01:I 36–II 9),²¹⁷⁸ the king claims that it was the storm-god Enlil who gave him dominion from the Upper sea to the Lower sea (although he makes no claim to have conquered the areas), whatever was meant by these terms in this particular inscription. Regardless of their function in Lugal-zage-si's ideology, it is possible that the Agadean Sargon, “fathered by no man”, was utilizing language used by Lugal-zage-si to legitimate his usurpation.

²¹⁷⁶ ‘Considered formulae’ are where the game of communications and the relationships of power are adjusted to one another. Foucault 1982, 787.

²¹⁷⁷ Malamat 1965, 365.

²¹⁷⁸ (U₄ [P]EN-LİL LUGAL KUR-KUR-RA-KE₄ LUGAL-ZÀ-GE-SI NAM-LUGAL KALAM-MA E-NA-ŠŪM-MA-A IGI KALAM!-MA-KE₄ SI E-NA-SÁ-A KUR-KUR GIRÌ-NA E-NI-SÈ-GA-A UTU-È-TA UTU-ŠŪ-ŠÈ GŪ E-NA-GAR-RA-A U₄-BA A-AB-BA SIG-<TA>-TA IDIGNA BURANUM-BÈ A-AB-BA IGI-DIM-MA-ŠÈ / when Enlil, king of the world, had given Lugal-zage-si the kingship of the land and had let the eyes of the land be directed toward him and had placed all the foreign lands at his feet and had made them subject to him from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, then from the Lower sea of the Tigris and Euphrates to the Upper sea (Enlil) put their roads in good order for him. From the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, Enlil permitted him no rival.

Lugal-zage-si's Empire was established by the time Sargon entered the scene. According to his inscription E2.1.1.2, Sargon defeated Lugal-zage-si and took over his Empire (and possibly, his monarchic propaganda and royal ideology), thereby becoming the ruler of the largest Mesopotamian Empire up until that time. In fact, the kingdom of Sargon may be considered the first Empire.²¹⁷⁹

The conquest of the sea is not found in any other Pre-Sargonic royal inscription, as no king had claimed to have performed the feat before. Lugal-zage-si and Sargon were the first “rulers of the known world”. But while Lugal-zage-si's inscription may have been the prototype upon which *Sargon* modelled his royal inscriptions, it is Sargon's conquests that set the standard for what *subsequent* Mesopotamian kings were supposed to have accomplished.²¹⁸⁰ According to Rollinger, throughout Mesopotamian history, the coastal areas were identified with the borders of the known world, “felicitously underlined by the royal claim to rule the world” from the Upper sea to the Lower sea – although it must be emphasized that we have no evidence of the concept pre-dating Sargon and Lugal-zage-si.²¹⁸¹ The motif is visible especially in the monumental bull inscriptions of Shalmaneser from Calah (A.0.102.8:24–40), in which the description of Shalmaneser as the conqueror of the world bordered by the seas and the rivers follows immediately after the description of his patronage, epithets, and lineage (genealogy), effectively opening the actual inscription.²¹⁸² But we have no textual reason to assume that such was the case in Mesopotamian history before the time of Lugal-zage-si, nor that any king had pretensions of world dominance prior to Sargon.

It is also significant for the formation of the later traditions that during his voyage, Sargon appears to have made a stop at Tuttul in Mari territory to honour Dagan, the storm-god of the area.²¹⁸³ The ideological programme is explicitly

²¹⁷⁹ See the articles in the M. Liverani edited volume *Akkad, The First World Empire: Structure, Ideology, Traditions* (Eisenbrauns: HANES 5, 1993).

²¹⁸⁰ Yeivin 1934, 226: “What is known of such re-editing of Assyrian annals has definitely shown that successive editions are apt not only to exaggerate the importance of facts and magnify statistics out of all proportion to reality, but also to recast completely the real course of events, turning crushing defeats into splendid victories”.

²¹⁸¹ Rollinger 2012, 730.

²¹⁸² This description also features prominently in the statue of Shalmaneser dedicated to the storm-god Adad, A.0.102.12. Grayson (1996, 56) dubbed this portion of the inscriptions the “narrative of the accession and first regnal years”. I will return to the figure of Shalmaneser subsequently.

²¹⁸³ Green 2003, 68.

stated in the bilingual inscription E2.1.1.11 14–22:²¹⁸⁴ “Sargon the king of Tuttul bowed down to Dagan (Akk. “Sargon the king bowed down to Dagan in Tuttul). He (Dagan) gave to him (Sargon) the Upper Land – Mari (and Ebla, etc.)”. Sargon, importantly, *conquered the Amorite lands with the blessing of the Amorite Storm-God*. Later Neo-Assyrian rulers also seem to have made a stop in their campaigns to sacrifice before the Adad of Aleppo (cf., e.g. A.O.102.6 ii 25). The Sargon omens discovered at Mari, popular also in later times, witness to the longevity of Sargonic traditions in the area.²¹⁸⁵ Additionally, there is a text featuring the report of a revolt against Naram-Sin (FM 3 1) among the Mari texts, which Sasson suggested was used as inspiration by the Mari scribes in their own letters.²¹⁸⁶ A yet unpublished text from the Mari archives also features the arrival of one of Sargon’s generals to Mari, indicating that there was contact between the city and the monarch.²¹⁸⁷ This may be further corroborated by archaeological evidence.²¹⁸⁸ The facts that Sargon visited Mari and that his legend was known at Mari are significant to the formation of the foundational Combat Myth.

The copy of a stele inscription of Naram-Sin (E2.1.4.46) has also been found on an OB tablet from Mari, as well as a copy of the literary text the Great Revolt, a later Naram-Sin legend.²¹⁸⁹ Naram-Sin’s daughters, Šumšani and ME-ulmaš, were also known by name in Mari (E2.1.5.51–52). According to Frayne, the Mariotes also maintained a cult of the dead kings (*kispum*) for Sargon and Naram-sin in later times.²¹⁹⁰ This may even indicate that the Mariote rulers somehow derived their legitimation from the Sargonic kings.²¹⁹¹ Mari of the Old Babylonian period was an important nexus between the NWS Amorite culture and the East Semitic Sargonic Akkadian culture, situated equidistant from Aleppo,

²¹⁸⁴ The numbering follows the Sumerian column (the Akkadian differs slightly): ŠAR.UM.GI LUGAL DU₈.DU₈-LI^{ki}-a ^dDA.GAN-ra KI-a MU.NA.ZA ŠÜD MU.NA.DE₆ KALAM IGI.NIM MU.NA.SUM MAR.Ī^{ki} / *šar-ru.GI LUGAL ina tu-tu-liki a-na ^dDA-GAN úš-kà-en ik-ru-ub ma-tám a-lí-tam i-dí-šum₆ ma-ri-am^{ki} ... a-di-ma.*

²¹⁸⁵ Green 2003, 68; Horowitz 1998, 77.

²¹⁸⁶ Sasson 2014, 689.

²¹⁸⁷ See Horowitz 1998, 77. E2.1.1.1 81–87, in which Mari and Elam are ‘stood before Sargon’, may also hint at his conquest of the cities.

²¹⁸⁸ There is a destruction layer, as well as signs of reoccupation, at Mari’s so-called Presargonic Palace which coincides with the Early and Middle Sargonic period. Frayne 1993, 231.

²¹⁸⁹ Chavalas 2006, 30.

²¹⁹⁰ Frayne 1993, 231; Lange 2015.

²¹⁹¹ Lange 2015, 111. Wyatt 2001, 115: “Kings frequently claimed in public inscriptions or liturgical texts to rule the entire world. This is easily dismissed as propagandistic language, an elevated style common to royal proclamations [...] But to take it as essentially vacuous, a mere form of words, is to misconstrue the psychological and religious impulses giving rise to it”.

Babylon, and Eshnunna.²¹⁹² Mari's role in the creation and transmission of these traditions ought not to be underestimated.

Rollinger submitted that already during the 3rd millennium BCE Mesopotamian rulers would have attempted to spread their rule beyond these limits, which would suggest that these "peripheral" regions were not actually considered as the edges of the world. He also pointed out that during the 2nd millennium BCE, the direction of expansion of the Mesopotamian empires was spread on an east-west axis, as opposed to the north-south axis of the previous Mesopotamian rulers.²¹⁹³ I suggest that the interplay of centre and periphery (and the shifting of the centre) are more relevant than the orientation of the axis. Furthermore, A.O.103.17:54 ("the statues of my might I erected by the mountains and the seas") clearly suggests that it was the setting up the statues at the borders of the Empire that was the significant factor in defining the borders, not the washing of the weapons – the symbolic value of which, I hold, was of a different nature: legitimating kingship.

It is not unimportant that Sargon's grandson Naram-Sin likewise claimed dominion from the Upper sea to the Lower sea,²¹⁹⁴ and to have washed his weapon in the sea.²¹⁹⁵ While the emulation or copying of portions of the royal inscriptions of former kings seems to have been a common practice,²¹⁹⁶ few monarchs actually made the claim on the washing of the weapon in the sea. Naram-Sin was also the first Mesopotamian king to elevate himself as god during his lifetime, not only appending the *dingir*-sign to his name, but also the horned mitre of the gods in his royal iconography. This practice appears to have been common among the later Semitic rulers of Egypt, although the practice of giving living kings the designation *ntr-nfr* had already started during the 4th dynasty, preceding Naram-Sin's reign by only some hundreds of years.²¹⁹⁷

Apparently the determinative was used by Naram-Sin only later in his reign.²¹⁹⁸ In my opinion, this would indicate a conscious ideological programme on behalf of Naram-Sin's court scribes or ideologues. In Naram-Sin, more than any other Mesopotamian monarch before him, the god and king became one, and

²¹⁹² Sasson 1998, 459.

²¹⁹³ Rollinger 2012, 730.

²¹⁹⁴ Malamat 1965, 365. Wyatt (2001, 116) calls this "broadly a repetition of Sargon's campaign".

²¹⁹⁵ RIME 2.1.4.3: 29–32.

²¹⁹⁶ In fact, subsequent kings are expressly ordered to emulate and surpass Sargon's achievements in the *Birth of Sargon* legend. Westenholz 1997, 45.

²¹⁹⁷ See James 1961, 38; Baines 1991, 39.

²¹⁹⁸ Frayne 1993, 84.

the deification²¹⁹⁹ of the monarch – apparently during his own lifetime – was certainly an important stepping-stone in the transformation of historical legend into myth. While he is writing about Sargon specifically, the description of Petrovich is not out of place even with Naram-Sin:

His accession to the throne and subsequent submission of Mesopotamia and surrounding lands to Akkadian sovereignty were accompanied by a calculated propagandistic campaign, the first such enterprise to extend itself to these limits. At the level of official art, royal relief became a functional medium for conveying ideological messages and invoking fear into the hearts of his enemies.²²⁰⁰

Frayne constructed a rough chronology of the events of Naram-Sin's life, which begins with his accession as king, his initial campaigns to consolidate his rule, the Great Revolt of Kish and Uruk, temple constructions following the quelling of the revolts, further military campaigns, and the broadening of his Empire, the propagandistic feat of reaching the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and a campaign to the Cedar Forest for timber, ending with the installation of his daughter *En-men-ana*.

Place names like Ebla and Amanus are mentioned in the inscription, indicating the direction of his campaign.²²⁰¹ The description of Naram-Sin's first year, being the year of his accession as king, is of crucial importance: "The year Naram-Sin received the weapon of Heaven from the temple of Enlil".²²⁰² This act quite possibly marked the very beginning of his reign. The washing of his weapons in the sea (SAG ^{giš}RA ù ^{giš}TUKUL-*kí-sú* in *ti-a-am-tim ša-píl-tim* Ì.LUH) is mentioned in the inscription E2.1.4.3, and the conquest from the Upper sea to the Lower sea in E2.1.4.28, E2.1.4.29²²⁰³, and possibly E2.1.4.1002. E2.1.4.3 mentions the crossing of a sea (*ti-a-am-tim ... i-bi-ir-ma*) and the conquest of Magan in the midst of the sea (*qáb-li ti-a-am-tim*).

The mythologization of the tradition is witnessed by the inscriptions of

²¹⁹⁹ E2.1.4.10 actually records the building of a temple for the deified Naram-Sin during his lifetime.

²²⁰⁰ Petrovich 2013, 301.

²²⁰¹ Frayne 1993, 85–87; Wyatt 2001, 116. N.B. also p. 185: "Šar-kali-šarri followed in his father's footsteps by journeying to the sources of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers; the trip is mentioned in E2.1.5.4–5. He also emulated his father (sic) actions in cutting down cedar timber in the Amanus Mountains". While Naram-Sin's son did not claim to have washed his weapon in the sea, clearly recreating the actions of his predecessors was an important part of the consolidation of one's rule.

²²⁰² [MU] *na-ra-am-ē* EN.ZU É-^dEN.LÍL-t[a] TUKUL AN.NA ŠU *ba-ti-a*. The text is not in the RIME edition. The references Frayne gives for it are N 236: Civil, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 15 (1961), 80.

²²⁰³ This inscription (duplicated in Šar-kali-šarri's E2.1.5.5) is interesting with regard to the Ugaritic texts. "From beyond the Lower sea as far as the Upper sea he smote people and all the Mountain lands for the god Enlil. He showed mercy to no one. He reached the source of the Tigris river and the source of the Euphrates river and cut down cedar wood in the Amanus for (lit. of) the temple of the goddess Ishtar".

subsequent kings. In addition to Sargon and Naram-Sin, Sargon's son Maništūšu claims to have conquered lands 'beyond the sea' (RIME 2.1.3.1). That there may have been a historical basis to Sargon's campaigns is indicated by the fact that, his son Rimuš, for example, does not mention the conquest of the Mediterranean nor the Upper and the Lower seas (except possibly in E2.1.2.9, the beginning of which is broken, which *may* feature Enlil giving to Rimuš the lands from the Upper sea to the Lower sea), suggesting that these were not yet literary tropes in his time. He mentions collecting tribute from the Lower sea in E2.1.2.4, which was probably intended to be a historical statement (and may also indicate that he failed to keep the entirety of the area conquered by Sargon under his control). Neither Rimuš nor Man-Ištušu claimed to have washed their weapons in the sea.

Language which is similar to the Sargonic royal inscriptions and reminiscent of the later traditions is found in a cultic psalm dedicated to Shamash, possibly from Sippar.²²⁰⁴ In SBH 23 obv. 19–25, we find the following lines:

DINGIR BABBAR É-ta DINGIR BABBAR ŠUŠ-A-Š UR-	From sunrise to sunset, grea[t hero]
SA[G-GAL]	
IM-GAL-LU IM ĞIR-ra UR-[SAG-GAL]	In the south and north, [great he]ro
A-AB-BA SIK-ŠÚ [UR-SAG-GAL]	to the Lower sea, [great hero]
A-AB-BA ŠI-NIM-ŠÚ [UR-SAG-GAL]	to the Upper sea, [great hero]
KI ^{GIŠ} GA-LU-ÚB DA-RI-ta [UR-SAG-GAL]	in the land of the eternal <i>haluppu</i> -tree, [great hero]
^{GIŠ} GA-LU-ÚB ^{GIŠ} TIR ^{GIŠ} ERIN-KUD-da [UR-SAG-GAL]	the <i>haluppu</i> -tree, the cedar forest, [great hero]
^D EN-BI-LU-LU ^{GIŠ} TIR ^{GIŠ} ERIN [UR-SAG-GAL]	Marduk ²²⁰⁵ of the cedar forest, [great hero]

The reverse side of the same tablet SBH 23 rev. 1 (restored from R IV 26:4,5) also features a line in which the sea and the Euphrates river are contrasted, paralleling the storm-god Baal's defeat of Prince Sea, Judge River of Ugarit:

UR-SAG ME-EN A-AB-BA UM-[MI-LAL AB-ŠI	You are a hero, if it ²²⁰⁶ is directed upon the
GU-LUG-GA]	sea, [the sea shudders]
UR-SAG ME-EN SUG-ga UM-MI-[LAL SUG-ga	You are a hero, if it is directed upon the
ŠE-ÁM-DU]	marsh, [the marsh moans]
A-GE-A ^{ID} ZIMBIR ^{KI} -GE [UM-MI-LAL]	if it be directed upon the Euphrates, [the
	Euphrates moans]

It is difficult to ascertain what the original function of the hymn was, but the vocabulary used in it is very similar to the Sargonic legend and what we find in later royal inscriptions. It is possible that the Sargonic authors borrowed their language of royal legitimation from temple liturgies in addition to embellishing Lugal-zage-si's royal inscriptions. Lines 19–20 of the above passage are also

²²⁰⁴ Langdon 1914, 57.

²²⁰⁵ Enbilulu is equated with Marduk and Adad of Babylon. Kutscher 1975, 50.

²²⁰⁶ Langdon 1914, 56, 69, interprets "it" as the word of Enlil and Anu; he connects the hymn to a series of hymns intended for the cult of Ur bearing the same catch line, *an-na e-lum-e*. However, there may exist no connection between the texts. Some sort of offensive force or weapon is probably indicated.

found in a Ninevite text SBH 47 19–22 with their Akkadian translations, but the rest of the lines do not follow. Instead, the text continues with the wailing of the queen of Nippur (*gašan Nibru^{ki}*). This may lend support to the suggestion that lines 21–25 are not in their original context in the above passage. The parallelism of the Upper and the Lower sea may have been added to further flesh out the parallelisms of North and South and East and West in the sense of the rising and setting sun. The rest of the lines may simply have followed due to their association with the Upper and the Lower seas.

One of Gunkel's arguments for the Babylonian origin of what he dubbed the 'Chaos Battle Myth' in the HB was the geographic unimportance of the sea with regard to Jerusalem. According to him, only the Babylonian genesis of the myth could explain why Yahweh needed to charge through the sea on his way from Paran to Palestine; thus, the presence of the sea in the texts was puzzling not only to him, but to the ancient Hebrew poet.²²⁰⁷ The point is pertinent, but the same surely holds true for Babylon, situated at an even further remove from the sea than Jerusalem – just as it holds true for Mari, Terqa, Tuttul, and Aleppo, and all of the great inland centres of the Fertile Crescent, where most of the inhabitants had never dreamt of the sea, let alone witnessed it. And yet they still knew by reputation the Storm-God of Aleppo, who had defeated the sea with his weapons. The conquest of the sea makes sense in these regions only if the Sargonic mythology is understood as the underlying ideology. In this, I am fundamentally opposed to Kloos, who writes:

Yam represents the ordinary, earthly sea, and that the Canaanite myth about the battle with the sea must have originated among people living at the coast [...] Moreover – although the myth must have originated at the coast – the story spread to other parts of Syria and Palestine; it must have been told and listened to by people who had perhaps never set eyes on the sea.²²⁰⁸

She used this to explain incongruences in the seasonal pattern – i.e. why the myth would have been associated with an autumnal festival in Ugarit (of which we have no evidence) instead of during the winter (Dec-Feb) when the heaviest storms occur. But extant textual evidence places the origins of the myth deep inland, from which it spread to the coast, and the kind of function it served in the area of the Fertile Crescent makes its later adoption on the coastal areas rather surprising, as the world/empire border-demarcating function of the conquest of the sea was not relevant there. The oldest textual traditions are clearly and inarguably *not* from the

²²⁰⁷ Gunkel 2006^[1895], 70.

²²⁰⁸ Kloos 1986, 196–197.

coastal area.

Seen against the backdrop of the world-expanding military conquests of the inland empires of Mesopotamia, the presence of the myth in the coastal kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean is the puzzling feature (as they were already *by* the sea and did not need to conquer it in the same sense as the Mesopotamian monarchs did), explained perhaps by the enduring popularity of both Sargon and the Storm-God of Aleppo, and the merging of these narratives with local traditions over the ensuing centuries.²²⁰⁹ If it were merely a question of the Ugaritic myth, it could easily be explained by the use of Aleppan royal ideology in the construction of identity for the Ugaritic dynasty as a sort of ideological programme. But because traces of the myth can be found in most of the coastal cities all the way down to Gaza, this does not stand. It can only be explained by the enduring strength of the Sargonic mythology in the legitimization of kingship.

The only way to make sense of the myth is to insert the character of Sargon, whose famed stories of empire-building *lent significance* to the idea of the conquering of the sea. It is Sargon's campaign to the Mediterranean coast that even made the concept of the sea meaningful in the context. The storm-god Enlil appears to have been the dynastic god of the Akkadian Sargonids, the monarchic god who granted the legitimacy of their kingship, so the reverence to the Storm-God of Aleppo after Sargon's conquest of the Amorite tribes is unsurprising.²²¹⁰ Naram-Sin *explicates* his relationship to Enlil in E2.1.4.6 i 1–5: ^dEN.LIL *il-šu il-a-ba*₄ KALAG *ì-li il-la-at-śú*, which Frayne translated as “The god Enlil (is) his (personal) deity (and) the god Ilaba, mighty one of the gods, is his clan (god)”. I think he is mistaken in interpreting Ilaba as the proper name of a divinity separate from Enlil, especially since he seems to read *il* as part of the name and not a determinative. If it was a DN, surely the name should be read ^dAba. My interpretation of the nominal clause is: “Enlil, his god, (is) the god to his fathers, the mighty one of the gods (of) his clan”. The inscription continues with “Naram-Sin, the mighty king”, etc., which seems to parallel or align the god and the king

²²⁰⁹ Jidejian (1992, 28) pointed out: “Because of their great love for the sea and their total dependence on it, they [the inhabitants of the cities of the coastal cities] advanced on different lines from the Canaanites of the interior”.

²²¹⁰ See E2.1.4.10 29–33, which parallels the dynastic god Enlil in Nippur with Dagan in Tuttul as granting Naram-Sin the godship of their cities when Naram-Sin was deified. Note that in the Pre-Sargonic period, the kings of Mari sometimes fashioned themselves as the Ensi of Enlil (cf. E1.10.17.1, 3: LUGAL MA.RÌ ENSI GAL ^dEN-LÍL), i.e. the vice-regent of the Storm-God.

(cf. also E2.1.4.50, where Naram-Sin fashions an image of *himself* which he dedicates to Enlil). Note also E2.1.4.26 ii 16–23, in which Naram-Sin calls Dagan “Ilaba”, the dynastic god, when referring to the conquest of the Amorite areas.

Effectively Naram-Sin claims to have conquered the Amorite lands with the aid of Dagan(=Enlil), his “Ilaba”, because in that area Dagan *was* the name for Enlil. Enlil had also been the name of the god of Lugal-zage-si, which may have been the reason for the Akkadian Sargonids’ adoption of the god. It is possible that they originally honoured a storm-god of another appellation (*Ilib?*), which they started calling by the name of Enlil after Sargon’s conquest of Uruk, for political reasons. While this is based on conjecture only, I suspect that the tribal god of the Akkadian Sargonids was in fact a deified ancestor, who either had characteristics of a storm-god originally or assimilated these characteristics from Enlil and the Upper Euphratean storm-gods; thus, each king who died essentially became the vessel for this god of the tribe, Ilib, ‘god of the father’. Sargon became for his descendants the human face of Ilib upon his death, as did Naram-Sin upon his. When one considers that the kings presented themselves essentially as avatars of the Storm-God during their lifetimes, this suggestion is not a great leap. But while the suggestion is possible and perhaps even plausible, it must be stressed that what is lacking is solid textual evidence. The question is whether this theoretical framework has an explanatory function – whether it explains the evidence that we do have.

It bears repeating that most of the sources on the Sargonic legends do not date to his time, but are considerably later and anecdotal, with most being from the Neo-Assyrian period. But as already stated, the historicity of the Sargonic narratives is not the focus of my inquiry, but rather the effect of the legends of Sargon’s conquest of the sea on Enlil’s behalf and with the blessing of the Amorite Dagan on the formation of the NWS Combat Myth, and its later use in monarchic legitimation. It was Sargon who made the myth. Without Sargon’s conquests, the myth would not have persisted, and it would not have been used by the generations of kings that followed him in the legitimation of their kingship and their conquests. Sargon the usurper, the baseborn, Sargon of the barely urbanized Akkadian tribes, Sargon the savage, *needed* something to legitimize his rule, so he conquered the sea for the Storm-God. Presenting himself as the legitimate king of “the black-headed people” was more important in the legitimation of his rule than it would have been if he had come from the Sumerian urban elite.

Sargon (or the Sargonic ideologues) portrayed himself as an instrument of the Storm-God, the Amorite Storm-God who he encountered at Tuttul or Aleppo, doing his divine will among the peoples. But at the same time, it was the myth that made Sargon. It was with the help of Enlil, Dagan, and Adad, the Storm-God's divine providence, that Sargon conquered the sea; the Storm-God and the myth aided him in creating his Empire. While the Storm-God helped propel Sargon to become the greatest king that had ever lived during his lifetime, so the act of Sargon's conquest of the sea on behalf of the Storm-God made the Storm-God the king of the gods. Soon after his death Sargon became legend, and his legend was fostered and perpetuated by the Sargonic kings (particularly Naram-Sin), who used the figure of their forefather to legitimize their own kingships. The Akkadian Sargonids worshipped their ancestors, which meant that Sargon became a divinity in his own right soon after his death, an ancestral god whose character merged with the dynastic god. Sargon would not have become Sargon without the fulfilment of the myth. And the myth would not have come to exist without Sargon's fulfilment of it. Without Sargon, the Upper Euphratean Storm-God would never have become the king of the gods. And the greater the ideologues of Naram-Sin made the kingship of his grandfather, the greater he himself consequently became.

According to Malamat, it is the text of the so-called Sargon chronicle that "doubtless indicates the sacred and purifying aspect of such a great body of water". Malamat also remarked on how the later Neo-Assyrian kings of the 1st millennium BCE often recorded their arrival on the Mediterranean coast and their offering of sacrifices on the seashore,²²¹¹ undoubtedly fashioning this propagandistic practice *on Sargon's precedent*. The troops of the Neo-Assyrian kings dipped their weapons in the water of the sea; according to Malamat they thus symbolically purified them, "with no further ceremony".²²¹² It is not inexplicable that it was among the Assyrians that the tradition found resurgence. While discussing the transmission of the motif of the "waters of abundance", Anthonioz writes: "As the Assyrian empire built itself in imitation and opposition to Babylon, this borrowing of a rhetorical model is unsurprising".²²¹³ The same can be applied to the conquest of the sea. But while this may be true, we must also

²²¹¹ Malamat 1998, 25. He also remarks that the sacrifices were not made "explicitly to the god of the Sea".

²²¹² Malamat 1998, 25.

²²¹³ Anthonioz 2014, 62.

remember that in the OB period the city of Assur was also a part of the Amorite network of kingdoms. As such, it was a direct recipient of the Sargonic traditions adopted by the Amorites – traditions which the Babylonians re-adopted in opposition to and imitation of the Assyrians themselves in the Neo-Babylonian era. Even later, we find similar notions in the Cyrus cylinder, suggesting that the tradition was alive and well even in Achaemenid times, which I discuss subsequently.

Rollinger further posited that the offerings made by Yahdun-Lim and the later Neo-Assyrian monarchs by the Mediterranean seem “to have been the same in all cases”.²²¹⁴ I do not think that this conclusion can be drawn from the textual sources, since the formulation of the sacrifices is different and their content is nowhere specified. Grayson made a valid observation that the narrative of the royal inscriptions should not uncritically be accepted as historical truth, as they are presented from the Assyrian king’s viewpoint, offering “an extremely biased perspective full of pompous self-praise and brutal hatred of those who opposed his will”.²²¹⁵ But what they offer in addition to this is a continuation of the motif which originated in the Sargonic royal inscriptions.

Next I will discuss the evidence of Assyrian royal inscriptions, which provide evidence of the evolution of the motifs and language found in the Sargonic and OB royal inscriptions in more detail. The continuation of the legitimating mythologeme from the Akkadian period to the Neo-Assyrian period is hardly surprising, as the legitimization of power is by nature highly conservative.

6.4.2.2 Tiglath-Pileser I: Slayer of Nahiru on the Sea

Establishing a link between the Akkadian and Neo-Assyrian inscriptions is difficult, and it risks veering into speculation. Although the direct or indirect succession of the inscriptions is peripheral to my thesis – there were monarchs who did not employ the mythology – I must acknowledge J. Scurlock for recommending to me the idea that the reburial of foundation stones may have served as a medium for the transference of the tradition. Nielsen also found the

²²¹⁴ Rollinger 2012, 370.

²²¹⁵ Grayson 1987, 3. Sasson (2014, 673) likewise made an important distinction between what studies on ancient texts suggest and what the ancient authors attempted to communicate.

transmission of political ideology to be linked to the foundation deposits and the “assiduous attention to restoration”, suggesting that the monarchs knew to look for them when they engaged in restoration projects – and engaging in restoration projects was one of the main duties of Mesopotamian kings.²²¹⁶ The Neo-Assyrian inscriptions can also be linked to the Akkadian inscriptions based on the language used in them, as the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions used archaic Akkadian.

The sea is mentioned in the 11th-c. BCE temple inscription of the Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser I (*Tukultī-apil-Ešarra*), commemorating the rebuilding of a temple of Anu and Adad in the city of Assur. Tiglath-Pileser I was the first monarch to rule after Assyria was restored to power following the so-called “period of decline”; according to Grayson, he was the greatest of Assyrian kings in the second millennium.²²¹⁷ Also following Grayson, during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser the Assyrians marched farther than ever before,²²¹⁸ making the claim of universal kingship justified on the part of the king. He was the first Assyrian monarch who claimed to have made a campaign to the Mediterranean Sea (in particular, Lebanon is mentioned in his inscriptions), and indeed he was the first Mesopotamian monarch after the OB Amorite rulers to make such claims. So while his inscription may owe influence to the Sargonic legends discussed in the previous chapter, it could well be that the following Assyrian inscriptions were at least in part *also* fashioned after Tiglath-Pileser’s own inscriptions. This development is natural, as his reign marked the beginning of a new type of royal inscription: the Annals.²²¹⁹

The question that warrants asking is why and how Tiglath-Pileser adopted these OB or Sargonic traditions of royal inscription, of which we have scarce evidence from the interceding Middle Assyrian period. It seems that there was increased scribal activity during his reign, and Babylonian texts were collected, copied, and edited at Assur, indicating that Tiglath-Pileser’s scribes did not merely have the royal inscriptions of former monarchs at their disposal, but also other types of texts, among them mythological narratives. According to Grayson, his

²²¹⁶ Nielsen 2012, 17.

²²¹⁷ Jidejian 1971, 30; Grayson 1987, 4.

²²¹⁸ Grayson 1991, 5.

²²¹⁹ Grayson 1991, 6: “Some new and significant themes appear in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser I and these are repeated, sometimes verbatim, in the annals of the subsequent major monarchs”. Note, however, that some of the portions in Tiglath-Pileser’s inscriptions seem to be quoted, often verbatim, from Sargonic inscriptions.

reign had a “permanent effect on Assyrian culture in the first millennium”.²²²⁰

Tiglath-Pileser’s Annals A.0.87.1:9–10 begin with the enumeration of his patronage, listing among the gods “Adad, the hero who storms over hostile nations, mountains (and) sea” (^dIškur *ur-ša-nu ra-hi-iš kib-rat KÚR^{meš} KUR^{meš} AB^{meš}-ti*), paralleling the symbols in the constellation of foreign nation, mountain, and sea. He then names Enlil as his monarchic divinity. On Col. i l. 49–50, he mentions the weapons granted to him by the gods, called “the deluge of battle” (^{giš}TUKUL^{meš} *-šu-nu dan-nu-ti a-bu-ub tam-ha-ri*), recalling the flood-weapon given by Enlil to Šu-sin. In Col. ii 62/iv 6, he makes mention of his tribute to Adad, ‘my lover’ (^dIškur AGA-ia / ^dIškur *ra-’i-mi-ia*),²²²¹ which is likely synonymous with the epithet ‘Beloved of Adad’ (*na-ra-am* ^dIškur) used by the OB monarchs.²²²² The function of this title may have been to emphasize the favour of Adad, as the NWS Aramean tribes banded together under the Upper Euphratean Storm-God were the major adversaries of the king.

The sea is mentioned in Col. IV 96f of the so-called Tiglath-Pileser Cylinder;²²²³ specifically, where the term “Upper sea” is used. Col. IV 43f makes mention of “Upper sea of the welcoming of the sun” (i.e. the West). This sea appears to be located in Anatolia. The sea is also mentioned in Tiglath-Pileser’s rock inscription of the Sebeh-Su River near the source of the Tigris (III R. 4, 6 / A.0.87.15), which speaks of the great sea of the land of Amurru and the Sea of Nairi, possibly corresponding to Lake Van, in which the conquest of the land (and nothing further) is all that is mentioned, meaning that it was considered of utmost importance.²²²⁴ The same is true of A.0.87.16, a text on a rock face at Yoncali by

²²²⁰ Grayson 1991, 5.

²²²¹ The only other god for whom he uses the same construction is Ninurta, Col. vi 61, 76 (contra vii 7, where Aššur is implicated alongside Ninurta DINGIR^{meš} ÁGA^{meš}-ia, but this could well be an error on the side of caution on the part of the scribe, as Aššur does not receive the designation elsewhere). This suggests that the word ‘love’ and the Storm-God have a special connection, which doubtfully has anything to do with the divinity having been considered a ‘god of love’ or his potency; it rather explicates the *election* by the divinity. Of course, Aššur did take on aspects of the Storm-God and was considered the dynastic divinity of the Assyrian monarchs, so the epithet *na-mad* ^dA-šur born by one of his ancestors (col. vii 56) is not out of place.

²²²² In A.0.87.13 the mention of ^dIškur AGA-ia precedes Tiglath-Pileser’s march to Lebanon, which he claimed to have made at the command of Adad. He may have assumed the title in the area of the Upper Euphrates.

²²²³ The famous inscription of A.0.87.1 is found on a number of clay prisms from Assur, one of which was used as a test case in the decipherment of the cuneiform script following the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. The texts of the prisms have been collated in the edition. Grayson 1991, 7.

²²²⁴ The Sea of Nairi and the washing of the weapons combined with the making of sacrifices are also mentioned in Shalmaneser III’s inscriptions: RIMA 3, A.0.102.1:33b–34, A.0.102.2:25b–28 and again on 58b–60a, A. 0.102.28. It is not entirely clear what body of water is meant by

Lake Van. Shalmaneser III's inscription is found in the same locale, so there is a literary connection between the two inscriptions. A.0.87.1 iv 49–51 makes mention of the lands of Nairi, the kings of which had not known submission on the shore of the Upper sea of setting of the sun (^{KUR.KUR}*na-i-ri* MAN^{meš}-*ni né-su-te ša a-ah* A.AB.BA *e-le-ni-ti ša ša-la-mu* ^d*šam-ši šá ka-na-ša la-a i-du-ú*). Col. iv 99 mentions further kings, whom he chased at arrow point to the Upper sea (*i-na zi-qít mul-mul-li-ia a-di* A.AB.BA).

These are all geographic references to the sea.²²²⁵ Unlike his successors, Tiglath-Pileser listed all of the lands and the cities in the area he conquered. In col. vi 40–43 he recapitulates his conquests: “I conquered 42 lands and their rulers from the other side of the Lower Zab in distant mountainous regions to the other side of the Euphrates, the people of Hatti and the Upper sea of the setting of the sun”. Also, unlike in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, where the conquest of the sea takes pride of place among the first of his conquests, in Tiglath-Pileser's inscription his conquests seem to follow a *chronological* order. However, in later inscriptions (A.0.87.2, 3) the recapitulation is moved to third place, closer to the beginning of the inscription, after patronage and epithets. In A.0.87.4:6–7, it actually makes up a part of the king's epithets: “he who had conquered by means of conflict[t and m]ight from Babylon of the land of the Akkadians (all the way up) to the Upper [se]a of the land of the Amorites and the sea of the lands of Nairi” (*iš-tu* ^{URU}KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{KI} *ša* ^{KUR}*ak-ka-di-i a-di* [A.AB.B]A *e-le-ni-te ša* ^{KUR}*a-mur-ri ù* A.AB.BA *ša* ^{KUR}*na-i-ri i-na ta-áš-nin-t[i ù d]a-na-ni qa-a-su ik-šu-du-ú-ma*), before even the names of his ancestors.²²²⁶ In some inscriptions

the term, as the geographic locations seem to shift from inscription to inscription. Shalmaneser is described as the conqueror “from the Sea of Nairi to the Western sea” in nearly every one of his inscriptions.

²²²⁵ Note, however, that earlier Assyrian monarchs like Tukulti-Ninurta I (A.0.78.2) had made mention of conquering the same areas including the land of Nairi, without using this terminology of demarcating borders with seas. Cf. A.0.78.4:5', however, which may be the first reference to Nairi and the sea in the royal inscriptions; it mentions the land of Nairi and land of the sea coast (^{KUR.KUR}*na-i-ri* ^{KUR.KUR}*a-ah tam-di*) in ordinary geographic designations. In A.0.78.5, he claims to have established the boundary of his land as far as the Lower sea of the rising of the sun (A.AB.BA KI.TA *šá ši-I* ^dUTU-*ši*, contra A.0.78.26: *a-ah* A.AB.BA *e-[le-ni-ti]*), still eschewing the formula for universal kingship. One can only conclude that a real presence on the Mediterranean coast was considered crucial. A.0.78.24, found in Tukulti-Ninurta's palace but not actually attributed to the king, contains the epithet “King of the Upper and Lower sea” (MAN A.AB.BA AN.TA *ù šu-pa-li-ti*), which clearly copied from an earlier inscription. The king's conquests also feature places which were destroyed centuries prior, like Mari. Tukulti-Ninurta and his father Adad-Nirari may have campaigned westward, but they maintained no permanent presence in the coastal areas.

²²²⁶ Ditto A.0.87.10. The shortened form of his epithet, which seems to be used in most inscriptions, is “Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, conqueror from Babylon of the land of Akkadians to Mount Lebanon to the Great Sea of the land of the Amorites and the sea of the

(A.0.87.21), the name of the king and the mention of the sea are all that remains.

Tiglath-Pileser's Annals represent the first text to make mention of the killing of a creature called the 'Nahiru' (A.0.87.1.1 / ARI LXXXVIII 4) (*na-hi-ra ša* ANŠE.KUR.RA *ša* A.AB.BA *i-qab-bi-ú-šu-ni i-na qa-bal* A.AB.BA *lu a-du-uk*). In ANET, Oppenheim translated it: "I killed a narwhal which they call "sea horse" on high sea".²²²⁷ Literally it reads: "Nahir(u), which is called the horse of the Great Sea, I killed in the midst of (alt. in the battle of) the Great Sea".²²²⁸ The creature Nahiru is also mentioned in two inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser's son Aššur-bel-kala (A.0.89.7:3 / ARI LXXXIX) and in two inscriptions from the later Aššurbanipal II, but it is mentioned nowhere outside of these inscriptions, and these too were most likely copied from the Tiglath-Pileser inscription – or they alternatively followed his precedent and recreated the act itself. All of these mentions seem to be connected to the locale of Arwad on the Eastern Mediterranean.

The creature has also been connected to the *anhr* mentioned in the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.5 I 15). Wyatt reconstructed the lines as follows:

<i>pnpš.npš.lbim thm.</i>	My appetite is the appetite of the monsters of the deep,
<i>brlt.anhr.bym</i>	the desire of the shark in the sea... ²²²⁹

The parallelism of his reconstruction works better than the conventional reading of *lbim thw hm*,²²³⁰ but it is not supported by the scribal exercise KTU 1.133:1–5, which features the lines:

<i>w y'ny.bn</i>	And he answers, the son
<i>ilm.mt. npšm</i>	of the gods/El, Mot: "My appetite/breath
<i>npš.lbim</i>	(is) like the appetite/breath of the monsters (of)
<i>thw . w npš</i>	the wilderness and my appetite/breath
<i>anhr. b ym</i>	is like the beast in the sea"

The words *npš* and *brlt* both refer to the area of the throat and the oesophagus, so my suggested translation of the lines is a physical description of the monstrous jaws of Death: "And my maw is the maw of the *lbim* (labbu-demons?) of the

land of Nairi".

²²²⁷ ANET, 275. The narwhal(e), *monodon monoceros*, is a type of toothed whale found in the Arctic, the use of which in the translation seems to have been poetic license on Oppenheim's part. It is difficult to ascertain what creature was meant by the Akkadian term, but the suggested derivation is from the verb *nahāru*, the meaning of which is snorting. Whether or not this was a real animal, Tiglath-Pileser had a replica of it constructed at his palace entrance.

²²²⁸ There is a curious connection between the horse and the sea, as seen, for example, in the Hellenistic period with Poseidon and the horse in the iconography of the Eastern Mediterranean. There is also a variant in A.0.87.4, which reads "I received tribute from the city Arwad and the lands of Byblos, Sidon: a crocodile (*nam-su-ha*) and a great apess (*pa-gu-ta GAL-ti*) of the sea coast". The animals might be a tribute, but they might also represent the symbols of cities, as their standards.

²²²⁹ Wyatt 2002, 117.

²²³⁰ For discussion on the term *thw*, see Tsumura 2005, 10–13.

deep, my gullet (that of) the *anhr* of the sea”. Wapnish derived the Ugaritic word from the root *nhr* with the meaning of snorting, pointing out that in Semitic languages n-initial verbs form a morphological class in which many verbs denote the making of a sound.²²³¹ However, due to the existence of the initial aleph in the Ugaritic word and the inability of Akkadian orthography to distinguish between voiceless velar and uvular fricatives, the association of the Ugaritic *anhr* to the Akkadian *nahiru* must remain tentative at best. While the Akkadian term has been used in translating the Ugaritic word due to the succession of the discovery of the texts, it bears mentioning that the Ugaritic couplet is actually older, pre-dating the Tiglath-Pileser inscription by at least a few hundred years. The poetic association between a creature called *anhr* and the sea may have been familiar to the Assyrian scribes. And indeed, as the slaying of the creature happened on the coast, it is likely that NWS conceptions belie it.

The scribal text KTU 1.133 connects this creature not just to the sea, but possibly also to Yamm. In lines 9–10 we find the parallelism of *ym* and *nhr*, although they are not accompanied by any titles. The lines, although unbroken, are difficult to interpret. They feature the word *ks*, ‘cup’, and possibly the imperative form of the word *ysk/nsk*, ‘to pour’, and the name of *mt*. But who pours what for whom? The role of Yamm as Mot’s cup-bearer has been discussed, and his lack of princely title may be an indication of his subservient status at this time. Both in the scribal exercise l. 16–17 and in the Baal Cycle (1.5 I 13) Mot bears the title *ydd il* or *ydd bn il*, being the ‘favoured of El’; if my interpretation of the epithet is correct, he is either the crown-prince or the monarch himself. But this does not mean that the former favoured of El, Yamm, is necessarily now his thrall.

It is also possible that the sea and the river were merely used to describe Mot’s boundless thirst in contrast to his vast appetite: *hm.ks.ym / sk.nhr.hm / šb’.ydyt.b š’*, “Like a cup (is) the sea,/ a pitcher the river, like/ seven portions for the pouring²²³²” or even “Like the sea is my cup, (like) the river my pitcher”.²²³³ The lines are in a different order in KTU 1.5 I 20–22: *hm.šb’ / ydyt.b š’.hm . ks. ymsk / nhr*. As there is no word divider between *ym* and *sk*, some translations have attempted to read a verbal form into it.²²³⁴ The evidence of KTU 1.133, the

²²³¹ Wapnish 1995, 251.

²²³² On the basis of the Hebrew צעה and the context.

²²³³ I interpret the *hm* as emphasizing the parallel here.

²²³⁴ E.g. Hays 2011, 122, who translates: “And my seven portions are in a bowl and they mix (into my) cup a (whole) river”.

parallelism, and the tricolon structure suggest, however, that *ym* is a reference to the sea, albeit not necessarily to Yamm. What the Ugaritic texts do evidence is the connection of the Nahiru to the sea, and possibly to the Combat Myth on the Levantine littoral.

The language of Tiglath-Pileser's inscription is similar to the previous inscriptions, mentioning the locale of Lebanon (A.0.87.3: 16–25),²²³⁵ cedar wood and tribute, which he claimed to have received from the Phoenician cities of Byblos, Sidon, and Arwad after having conquered the entirety of the land of Amurru. In the inscription that mentions the conquest of Amurru; its conquest and the conquest of Nairi as far as the sea both feature in the beginning, following patronage and epithet. The cedarwood of Lebanon seems to have been one of the symbols of kingship, mentioned also in the Baal Cycle for example in connection with the building of his palace (KTU 1.4 V 10–11), for which it was essential; indeed, it is one of the very reasons why conquering the coastal regions was so attractive. This portion of the inscription, featured here for the first time, is copied verbatim in the inscriptions of subsequent monarchs, apart from the slaying of the Nahiru, which seems to have taken place during Tiglath-Pileser's conquest of the land of Amurru, suggesting that this slaying of the beast of the sea had some symbolic significance in the Amorite coastal area. His accession of kingship of the coastal cities of Amurru may have involved a symbolic battle with the sea.

The inscription A.0.87.4: 67–71 may also be illuminating in this regard: “I made basalt replicas of the Nahiru, which is called the horse of the sea, which by the order of the gods Ninurta and Nergal, the great gods, my lords, I had killed with a harpoon made by my hand (*pa-ri-an-gi ep-šet qa-ti-šu-ni*) in the Great sea of the Amorites, and a live ?? which was brought down from the mountain Lumaš ... I stationed them on the right and left at my [royal entrance]”.²²³⁶ The word ‘pariangu’ is of unknown meaning (it may indeed be a weapon, if the ^{giš}TUKUL *ši-i* of inscription 8 refers to it), but it is the slaying with the hand of the king (“my hand”) that is interesting in this context. I have discussed several texts which seem to indicate that something called ‘the hand of the king’ was a special weapon in the NWS area, and these Tiglath-Pileser inscriptions seem to indicate that this weapon was used to stage symbolic combats between the king and some sea-

²²³⁵ Note also that in the LBA, the area named Lebanon reached all the way down to Southern Galilee. See Yeivin 1943, 213. “Galilee formed one administrative district together with the southern Lebanon and he region of Damascus under the Egyptian rule”.

²²³⁶ Ditto A.0.87.5, 8.

creature in the coastal cities. It may even be that this staged combat against some beast of the sea was required for him to be accepted as the king in these areas.

While the military fortunes of Assyria waned between the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser I and Aššurnasirpal II (who is the next major witness to the tradition), between their reigns the Upper sea is mentioned in two inscriptions of Aššur-bel-Kala (A.0.89.4, 7). These mentions of the sea are most likely copied from Tiglath-Pileser, as they mention specific details like great apes and crocodiles being given as gifts and the crossing of the Euphrates on goat skins. I will pass over the monarch and move on to the next significant link in the chain of tradition.

6.4.2.3 Aššurnasirpal II: From the River to the Sea

There was a period of decline in the fortunes of Assyria following the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I. Aššurnasirpal II was the monarch who raised the Empire back to prominence on the ancient world stage, so it is fitting that no king between them made claims of universal kingship.²²³⁷ Aššurnasirpal II made a campaign similar to Sargon and Yahdun-Lim, which is related in the Annals. Among his conquests were Carchemish and Mt. Lebanon. In A.0.101, “the longest and most important Assyrian royal inscription”,²²³⁸ reference is made to the washing of his weapon in the sea and the offering of sacrifices by the sea, a feature of the Mariote inscriptions which had not been mentioned in the inscriptions of Assyrian rulers prior to him. This inscription was inscribed on the walls of the temple of Ninurta at Calah, to whom it is also dedicated.

Aššurnasirpal also fashioned himself as the ‘Beloved of Adad’ (A.0.101.1:33, *na-mad* ^d10).²²³⁹ His inscriptions were longer than any of those before him, meaning that he not only included more detailed descriptions of his campaigns, but that he also borrowed more material from his predecessors, seeming to incorporate all of the legitimating phrases available to him.²²⁴⁰

²²³⁷ According to Grayson (1991, 189), his reign was “one of the most important eras in Mesopotamian history”.

²²³⁸ So Grayson 1991, 191.

²²³⁹ ^d10 is the logogram predominantly used of the Storm-God from the 15th century BCE onward.

²²⁴⁰ He makes mentions of large apesses and the crossing of rivers with goat skins akin to Tiglath-Pileser. The passages may be copied, but he may also have recreated scenes from earlier inscriptions.

Aššurnasirpal's Annal inscription (A.0.101.1: iii 84–85)²²⁴¹ reads:

*ina u₁-me-šú-ma ši-di^{KUR}lab-na-na lu aš-bat a-na tam-di GAL-te šá^{KUR}a-mur-ri lu-ú e-li
ina A.AB.BA GAL-te^{GIS}TUKUL.meš-a lu ú-lil UDU.SISKUR.meš a-na DINGIR.meš-ni
lu aš-bat*

On that day I marched to the mountains of the land of Lebanon; I made my way up to the Great Sea of the Land of Amurru. I truly washed my weapons in the Great Sea; I brought offerings to the gods.

The mention of the washing of the weapons is not found at the beginning of the inscription at a place of prominence, but seems to follow a chronological sequence.²²⁴² The feat is described in language very similar to both Sargon and Yahdun-Lim's inscriptions, although it is more likely modelled on the former. On l. ii 127–128, which on the other hand seems to feature the beginning of a new inscription embedded inside the longer one, he describes his Empire as stretching “from the opposite bank of the Tigris to the mountain/land of Lebanon and the Great sea” (*iš-tu e-ber-ta-an^{ID}IDIGNA a-di^{KUR}lab-na-na u A.AB.BA GAL-ti*) at the very beginning of the inscription.²²⁴³ In spite of conquering Nairi, it is only on the Mediterranean shore that he washes his weapons.

The dominion from river to sea (not from sea to sea, probably due to the king's inability to conquer the southern regions) can also be found in Aššurnasirpal's Standard Inscription (A.0.101.23:8) from the North West Palace at Calah. Aššurnasirpal appears to be the first Assyrian monarch to use this particular construction, which is also a feature of the HB texts.²²⁴⁴ One of his epithets in the beginning of the inscription is “the king who subdued (the regions) from the opposite bank of the Tigris to Mt. Lebanon and the Great sea” (*MAN šá TA e-ber-tan^{ID}HAL.HAL a-di^{KUR}lab-na-na u A.AB.BA GAL-ti*).²²⁴⁵ In the standard

²²⁴¹ The same lines can also be found in another inscription, A.0.101.2:26–27, from the king's northwest palace at Calah, and on a stone tablet copy A.0.101.33: 15'–17'. This passage is not a feature of most of Aššurnasirpal's inscriptions, however, in which the dominance from river to sea features much more frequently, and often directly after his epithets or as a part of them, noticeably even before the mention of his construction of Calah.

²²⁴² Like Tiglath-Pileser, he also lists the Amorite cities from whom he received tribute on the coast, but his list is longer: Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Mahallatu, Maizu, Kaizu, Amurru, and Arvad. He also claims to have received an ivory of *nahirus*, “which are sea-creatures” (*na-hi-ri bi-nu-ut tam-di*).

²²⁴³ In A.0.101.2, the description of his empire as stretching from “the opposite bank of Tigris to Mt. Lebanon and the Great Sea” actually follows his patronage and epithets, taking pride of place. Ditto A.0.101.3.

²²⁴⁴ The same inscription was inscribed on hundreds of stone slabs in the palace with only minor variations. Grayson (1991, 268) suggested that “such slavish copying shows considerable lack of imagination of the part of the royal scribes”, but I would argue rather that it instead shows reverence to the format.

²²⁴⁵ Ditto A.0.101.30: 32, 34, 35, 38, 39 (a short inscription of 8 lines written on a stone statue of the king, which is basically a shortened form of his epithet, of which the mention of his conquest from the river to the sea takes up 4 entire lines), 40, 41, 42, 50, 51 (on bronze bands

inscription,²²⁴⁶ Aššurnasirpal also fashions himself as “the glorious king, the shepherd, the protection of the whole world, the king, the word of whose mouth destroys mountains and seas” (MAN *ta-na-da-a-te* LÚ.SIPA *ša-lu-ul* UB^{MEŠ} MAN *ša ina qí-bit* KA-šú *uš-har-ma-tu* KUR^{MEŠ}-e u A.AB.BA^{MEŠ}), which is a phrase not found in the inscriptions of his predecessors.

Note that Aššurnasirpal frequently calls *himself* the dragon or great serpent (*ú-šum-gal-lu*; e.g. A.0.107.17:12 and many others) and his own troops as the Anzu-monster (GIM *an-ze-e*, A.0.101.19:74), suggesting that the symbol of the dragon or the serpent was not necessarily, nor in all contexts, viewed negatively or thought only to represent the enemies of the king.²²⁴⁷ What the serpent symbolized was untamed power. The power could be a hostile power conquered by the king, but it could also be wielded by the king himself against his enemies. When the armies of hostile peoples threatened the nation, they were the primordial serpent. When the armies of the king stood imposing and unstoppable over his enemies, his own troops were the unconquered flood-dragon. This is further indication that chaos and order is not the dialectic at play, but power and conquest, where the king and the Storm-God could represent forces of ‘chaos’ just as much as their adversaries.

In A.0.101.1:106, Aššurnasirpal further blends his character with that of Adad, describing himself as having thundered against his enemies like ‘Adad of the devastation’ (*dīškur ša GĪR.BAL*), raining flames upon them. The same epithet of the king is also found on the Nimrud Monolith (BM 118805, the text A.0.107.17), situated at the entrance of Ninurta’s temple at Calah, which in addition to the text featured an image of the king and divine symbols. Otto discussed Ps. 2 in connection with this inscription, suggesting that the impetus in describing the king as a shepherd is to be found in Neo-Assyrian royal ideology.²²⁴⁸ In reality, the conception of the king as shepherd goes back at least as far as Sumerian inscriptions, where kings were frequently fashioned as SIPA, ‘shepherd’. Of course, the transmission of the concept to the world of the ancient

from Balawat, where Shalmaneser III’s inscription was also found), 55, 56, 67. N.B. A.0.101.53 features basically the same passage, but without the mention of the conquest of the Great Sea, suggesting that the inscription was made either prior to his campaign there or after losing his military foothold in the coastal area. A.0.101.66:8 has an entirely new and unprecedented element: ^{URU}*za-ban a-di* A.AB.BA GAL-*te*: From Zaban to the Great Sea.

²²⁴⁶ Ditto A.0.101.2.

²²⁴⁷ Green (2003, 46) suggested that the serpents MUŠ-ĜUŠ and UŠUM-GAL were considered to be benevolent, whereas the MUŠ-MAĜ was seen as malevolent.

²²⁴⁸ Otto 2002, 44.

Hebrews may well have happened through the Assyrians and the Neo-Assyrian conquest of the Levantine coast.

With regard to the slaying of the *nahiru*-beast by his two ancestors (and one successor) mentioned previously, there are two short inscriptions on the Balawat gates which are of interest: A.0.101.91 (GU₄.AM^{meš} *ina* UGU ^[D]*pu-rat-t[e] a-duk* / ‘I slew wild oxen on the Euphrates’) and A.0.101.92²²⁴⁹ (UR.MAH^{meš} *ina* UGU ^{ID}*ba-li-hi a-duk* / ‘I slew lions on the river Balih’). This indicates that the slaying of beasts on bodies of water was also practised by him. It is possible that there is a ritual aspect to the slaying, which could even have been conceived as a ritual combat. This may have been modelled on Tiglath-Pileser’s record of his slaying of a beast by the Mediterranean, which was likely in turn modelled on the NWS traditions of the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Many of the conceptions found in his inscriptions were also taken up by his son, Shalmaneser III.

6.4.2.4 Shalmaneser III: I Washed his Weapons in the Sea

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III, son of Aššurnasirpal II, who reigned between the years 858–824 BCE, is seen sacrificing to the sea in a stele he set up on the shore of the Mediterranean in an actual iconographic depiction of the event in question.²²⁵⁰ The same scene is found on the bronze reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, where Shalmaneser III is seen standing atop wavy lines, which could symbolize either mountain tops or the sea. According to Pritchard, the image shows a soldier throwing the legs of an ox, seized by a monster, into a lake. The inscription reads “I set up an image on the shore of the sea – I offered sacrifices to my gods”.²²⁵¹

Shalmaneser III was arguably one of the greatest monarchs of the Neo-Assyrian period, and as such he must have functioned as one of the nexus points in the transmission of the tradition. His inscriptions are some of the longest and

²²⁴⁹ Ditto A.0.101.95.

²²⁵⁰ For the erection of steles, see Rollinger 2012, 272. The Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III also boasts the erection of a stele (*wḏy*) on the shore of the Euphrates. Possibly his predecessor Thutmose I had done likewise. See Yeivin 1934, 197, 214. Mention of his father’s stele is made in the Annals of Karnak in connection with Thutmose III’s 8th campaign in Syria. However, note that this was not an indigenously Egyptian practice, but probably owed to local Mesopotamian customs.

²²⁵¹ Pritchard 1954, 205 (fig. 625); Luckenbill, AR I, §614; L. W. King 1915, 21–22.

feature the most exemplars, showing signs of having been built on the inscriptions of his predecessors. Unsurprisingly, Shalmaneser's inscriptions also seem to contain the most variations of the theme of the conquering of the sea. Shalmaneser expanded not only the royal inscriptions, but the Neo-Assyrian Empire itself, bringing the entirety of the Syrian area under Neo-Assyrian control. Grayson pointed out that the "entire" 9th and 8th centuries were a period of "historical consciousness" for the Neo-Assyrian rulers, during which period the kings adopted names of famous ancestors; some, like Šamši-Adad V and Shalmaneser I and III, even effected their inscriptions in archaic script.²²⁵²

Malamat connected both Shalmaneser's and Aššurnasirpal's inscriptions to Yahdun-Lim's Foundation Inscription and his campaign to the Mediterranean.²²⁵³ The famous inscription mentioning the Israelite King Omri from the walls of Assur A.0.102.10 iv 7–12 reads:

<p><i>a-na KUR-e</i> ^{KUR}<i>ba-'a-li-ra-'a-si šá SAG tam-di</i> <i>šá pu-ut</i> ^{KUR}<i>šur-ri al-lik ša-lam MAN-ti-ia</i> <i>ina lib-bi ú-še(*)-ziz ma-da-tu šá</i> ^{ma}<i>ba-'a-li-ma-</i> ^{an}<i>-NUMUN</i> ^m<i>šur-ra-a-a šá</i> ^m<i>ia-ú-a DUMU</i> ^m<i>hu-um-ri-i</i> <i>am-ḥur</i></p>	<p>To the mountain of Bali-Rasi which is a cape (head) on the sea, before the land of Tyre I went, the stele of my kingship in the heart (of it) I erected; the tribute of Bali- Manzeri the Tyroan (and) of Jehu son of Omri I received.</p>
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The same is also inscribed on the bulls from Calah A.0.102.8:22'–27',²²⁵⁴ with a slight variation:

<p><i>a-di KUR-e</i> ^{KUR}<i>ba-'a-li-ra-'a-si</i> <i>šá SAG tam-di a-lik ša-lam MAN-ti-ia</i> <i>ina lib-bi aš-qup ina u-me-šu-ma</i> <i>ma-da-tu šá</i> ^{KUR}<i>šur-ra-a-a</i> ^{KUR}<i>ši-du-na-a-a šá</i> ^m<i>ia-ú-a</i> ^{DUMU} <i>hu-um-ri-i am-ḥur</i></p>	<p>I went to the mountain of Bali-Rasi which is a cape (head) on the sea, the stele of my kingship in the midst (of it) I erected; on that day / the tribute of the Tyroans (and) the Sidonians (and?) of Jehu, the son of Omri I received.²²⁵⁵</p>
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These inscriptions form a link between the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and Biblical Israel. A copy of the Annals of Shalmaneser seems to have existed at least in Tyre, and it is likely that the Northern Israelite scribes had at least been

²²⁵² Grayson 1996, 3, 61, 181. "The choice of script used ... is an example of the imitation of past rulers and customs so prevalent in Assyria in the ninth century". Curiously, Šamši-Adad V did not march personally to the Mediterranean at the start of his reign, but sent his chief eunuch (A.0.103. ii 20). It is not until his third campaign (iii 67b–69) that he claimed to have "thundered like the god Adad, the thunderer from mount Kullar, the mighty mountain, to the Sea of the setting of the sun". He does not wash his weapons, make sacrifices by the sea or set up the stele, but he spreads his "awesome light" (*me-lam-me*) over the people. Perhaps the king was unable to reach the actual coast. The bureaucrats gained in power following his reign. Grayson 1996, 201.

²²⁵³ Malamat 1965, 367. Also Rollinger 2012, 727.

²²⁵⁴ A.0.102.12, Shalmaneser's statue of Adad, is nearly identical. A.0.102.16 may have a similar inscription, but it is badly broken.

²²⁵⁵ While it is not a question relevant to this thesis, the incongruence in describing the area ruled by Jehu using different terms from those used of Tyre and Sidon deserves consideration. Literally, the inscription translates as "The Sidonians of Jehu, son of Omri".

educated in the contents of the royal inscription. If Shalmaneser received tribute from the Omrides, it is likely that his royal inscription was sent to Israel in return.

There is a notable variation on the ‘standard script’ in Shalmaneser’s Annals. In A.0.102.1:7–8, the earliest of Shalmaneser’s inscriptions, he already describes himself as having conquered the Upper and the Lower sea at the beginning of his reign: *ina* SAG MAN-*ti-šú tam-tum e-[l]i-tu u tam-tum šú-pá-li-tu ŠU-su ik-šú-du*. Also, in the version of the Annals written on clay tablets (A.0.102.6 i 42–43) and the walls (A.0.102.10 i 23b–26) of the city of Assur itself (A.0.102.6 i 42–43), as well as in the famous Black Obelisk from Calah (A.0.102.14:26b–29), it is interesting to note that the description of the first regnal year of Shalmaneser begins with: “In my first regnal year I crossed the Euphrates in flood; I marched to the of the setting of the sun; I washed my weapons in the sea; I made sacrifices to my gods” (*ina* 1 BALA.MEŠ-*ia* ^{id}A.RAD *ina mi-li-ša e-bir a-na tam-di ša šul-me* ^d*šam-ši a-lik* ^{giš}TUKUL.MEŠ-*ia* *ina tam-di ú-lil* UDU.SISKUR.MEŠ *a-na* DINGIR.MEŠ-*ni-a aš-bat*). This campaign to the sea accompanied by a ritual act took place on the first year following his accession to the throne, suggesting that it was an important factor in the consolidation of his kingship.

The conquest of the Amanus region seems to take place again in his 11th year, so it is possible which the campaign that actually took place later on in his reign was projected to the first year in the inscriptions for the sake of its political significance. In fact, in Shalmaneser’s rock-face inscription on the upper Euphrates (A.0.102.20:3), the description of Shalmaneser as the conqueror of the sea (*ka-šid* TA *tam-di*) follows directly after the proclamation of Shalmaneser as the king of the universe and the king of Assyria (MAN ŠÚ MAN ^{KUR}*aš-šur-ma*). It is also worth noting that the description of Shalmaneser as the conqueror of the seas takes up nearly a quarter of the short inscription of Shalmaneser’s gold tablet A.0.102.26:5–9. The conquest of the sea follows his lineage and patronage in most inscriptions, making it seem like the most important of his feats and accomplishments.

In the throne-base inscription from Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud (A.0.102.28:18–20), we further find the following:

a-na tam-ti šá ^{KUR}*a-mur-ri a-lik* ^{giš}TUKUL.MEŠ-*ia* *ina tam-ti ú-lil ša-lam* MAN-*ti-ia* *ina* UGU *tam-ti ú-še-ziz*

I went up to the sea of the land of Amurru; I washed my weapons in the sea; I erected the stele of my kingship by the sea.

As with most of the other Shalmaneser inscriptions, this one also features the conquest of the sea in the first regnal year, effectively beginning the inscription proper. This is followed by the washing of the weapons in the sea, the setting of the stele proclaiming the royal name by the sea, and the making of sacrifices. The washing of the weapons in the sea is mentioned three times in the throne-base inscription, on three different sides of the throne, on lines 12, 19 and 42. The second mention features the setting up of the stele but no sacrifices, and the third mention features sacrifices but no stele. Note that the king was thus physically sitting on his conquest, the sea, in a quite literal manner.

The formulation of the Shalmaneser inscription is slightly different from other accounts, as it calls the sea “the sea of the Land of Amurru”, while still referring to the Mediterranean. In A.0.102.5 ii 2, the Mediterranean is referred to as the Western Sea of the land of Hatti, featuring in connection with the Sea of Nairi and the “Sea of the interior of the land of Zamua”. A.0.102.27, inscribed in a stone box from Assur, features the combination of the ‘Great Sea of the land of Amurru in the west to the Sea of Chaldea’.²²⁵⁶ If what is meant by the phrases is the Upper and Lower seas (usually rendered *tam-di* AN.TA *u* K.I.TA in Neo-Assyrian), it seems strange to use so many words to convey the shorter and more usual phrase in an inscription that is only 17 lines long. The idea of the Mediterranean seems to be emphasized, as the ‘Great Sea’, the ‘Sea of the land of Amurru’, and the ‘Sea of the setting of the sun’ could all be used to refer to it individually.

The inscription A.0.102.29 possibly juxtaposes the ‘Sea of the setting of the sun’ and the ‘Sea of the land of Amurru’, but the text is unfortunately broken in the critical juncture. The conjunctive *u* between them is visible in A.0.102.31:5, where it is unclear whether the Sea of the setting of the sun and the Sea of Amurru are two different seas. The short texts 31–35, inscribed on door sills at Fort Shalmaneser, are a classic example of Shalmaneser’s scribes using seas and the rivers to describe the borders of the Empire. In the inscription from the Nabu temple at Calah the king goes down to the Western Sea, washes his weapons in it and makes sacrifices to his gods. It must be stressed anew that the sacrifices are not made *to* the sea, but to the gods by the sea. He also makes a colossal statue of himself and writes on it the praises of Aššur before placing it by the sea

²²⁵⁶ TA *tam-di* GAL-ti ša KUR *a-mur-ri* ša šul-me ^dšam-ši *a-di* *tam-di* ša KUR *kal-di*.

(A.0.102.3:85b–89a).

The washing of the weapons and the setting of the stele on the shore of the sea seem to have happened also in the Sea of Nairi by the city of Sugunia (A.0.102.1:33b–37). The Nairi episode is sometimes also recorded with no mention of the sea or the sacrifices by it (A.0.102.6 iii 34–45), suggesting that the conquest of the sea had a significance that was not tied to the conquest of any geographic area, or that it could be employed in connection with any area when a certain political statement (assertion of complete dominance) needed to be made. In the aforementioned inscription A.0.102.1, which is his earliest, he does not yet set up a stele or wash his weapons by the Western Sea by the land of Amurru, but only takes the path to the same (l. 40b–42a).²²⁵⁷

Shalmaneser's inscriptions differ from the inscriptions of his predecessors in terms of their literary quality. The compositions are more carefully arranged in a chronological fashion, and events proceed according to regnal year rather than eponyms.²²⁵⁸ Shalmaneser also washed his weapon in the sea, and indeed he seems to have extended the concept: he washed his weapons and made his sacrifices not only in the Mediterranean, but also in the Sea of Nairi.²²⁵⁹ Rollinger suggested that the mention of Shalmaneser washing his weapon and setting up his stele on these seas with different names was a function of the king marking the boundaries of his Empire,²²⁶⁰ achieving a

natural and divinely sanctioned borderline which was soon integrated into a world view which presented the Ancient Near Eastern empires as 'world empires' and conceptualized their kings' power reaching as far as the fringes of the world.²²⁶¹

While such may have been the intention, we must also bear in mind that the seas of Nairi and Amurru are also mentioned in the Tiglath-Pileser inscription

²²⁵⁷ It is possible that the erection of the stele may have featured later in the inscription (l. 76'), but the inscription is broken on the obverse side. The reconstructed text by Grayson in l. 73'–76' is as follows: "[I overwhelmed the cities on the shore of the] Upper sea [of the land of Amur]ru, also called the [western] sea, [(so that they looked) like ruin hills (created by) the deluge. I received tribute from the kings] on the seashore [I marched about by right of victory in the extensive area of the seashore. I made] an image of [my] lordship". The signs for the images and the lordship are only partially preserved. The later inscription A.0.102.2 ii features the above passage unbroken, continuing with "I made an image of my lordship which establishes my name for eternity, and erected it by the sea".

²²⁵⁸ Grayson 1996, 5.

²²⁵⁹ RIMA 3, A.0.102.1: TA ^{URU}*su-gu-n-a at-tu.muš a-na* A.AB.BA ^{KUR}*ša na-i-ri at-ta-rad* ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.meš *ina* A.AB.BA *ú-lil* UDU.SISKUR.meš *ana* DINGIR.meš-ni-ia *aq-qí* *ina* u₄.me-š_u-ma *ša-lam bu-na-ni ... ina* UGU A.AB.BA *ú-ša-zi-iz/* I parted from the city of Sugunia and arrived to the great sea of the land of Nairi; the weapons I washed in the Great Sea; I made offerings to my gods. In those days I made a stele ... I erected it by the Great Sea.

²²⁶⁰ Rollinger 2012, 728.

²²⁶¹ Rollinger 2012, 730.

discussed above, suggesting that Shalmaneser was recreating (and perhaps retracing) existing tradition.

In fact, Shalmaneser's use of the terminology found in Tiglath-Pileser's inscription may be an indication of the fact that the later Neo-Assyrian inscriptions were modelled on Tiglath-Pileser's precedent as much as on that of Sargon. While Shalmaneser may have been marking the edges of his Empire, he was also, and more importantly, following in the footsteps of an earlier king. Rollinger continues: "The connection of the ritual with the idea of world empire and the conception of expanding the rule as far as to the limits of this world are basic elements of the royal ideology".²²⁶² I agree with this point, but submit that it became a basic element of the royal ideology only following Sargon's reign, as the idea of world Empire and the concept of the conquering of the sea did not exist prior to his reign.

Commenting on the ancient Egyptian practice of copying the iconography and royal inscriptions of former rulers, Frankfort writes:

the king continues to appear as the fountainhead of all effective action, as the sole agent of victory. But in victory, as in every other deed of his reign, the king acts out and realizes a prefigured course of events.²²⁶³

The inscriptions of their predecessors were not the only things that the ancient kings recreated; they also recreated modes of action, seeking to copy the very actions and deeds of past rulers. This again presents us with the question of whether one might exist without the other. The washing of the weapons is a further feature of the throne-base inscription of Shalmaneser III found in Nimrud.²²⁶⁴

Other Shalmaneser inscriptions mentioning the sea include the Kurkh monolith ii 18/A.0.102.2²²⁶⁵ and Balawat Gates inscription ii 5/ A.0.102.63,²²⁶⁶

²²⁶² Rollinger 2012, 731.

²²⁶³ Frankfort 1948, 49: "the texts, emphasize the traditional, at the expense of the historical elements of the victory".

²²⁶⁴ RIMA 3, A.0.102.28: *a-na A.AB.BA šá KURna-'i-ri a-lik GIS^TTUKUL.meš-ia ina tam-ti ú-lil UDU.SISKUR.meš a-na DINGIR.meš-ia aq-qí 'a-lam MAN-ti-ia mu-kin MU-ia ina UGU tam-ti ú-še-ziz ... a-na tam-ti šá KURa-mur-ri a-lik GIS^TTUKUL.meš-ia ina tam-ti ú-lil a-lam MAN-ti-ia ina UGU tam-ti ú-še-ziz ... a-na tam-ti šá šul-me šam-ši a-lik GIS^TTUKUL.meš-ia ina tam-ti ú-lil UDU.SISKUR.meš a-na DINGIR.meš-ia aš-bat / I went to the sea of the land of Nairi; I washed my weapons in the sea; I gave offerings to my gods; I erected by the sea the stele of my kingship in which my name was established ... I went to the sea of the land of Amurru; I washed my weapons in the sea; the stele of my kingship I set up by the sea ... I went to the sea of the setting of the sun; I washed my weapons in the sea; I brought forth offerings to my gods.*

²²⁶⁵ RIMA 3, A.0.102.2: *TA URUSu.gu.ni.a at-tu.muš a-na tam-di šá KURna-i-ri at-ta-rad GIS^TTUKUL.meš ina tam-di ú-lil UDU.SISKUR.meš ana DINGIR.meš-ia BAL-qí ina u₄.me-šu-ma ša-lam bu-na-ni-ia ... ina UGU tam-di ú-še-ziz ... a-na tam-di šá KURna-i-ri at-ta-rad*

which mentions the erection of Shalmaneser's statue by the sea (depicted in Gate C, band D), as well as the unfinished inscription from Til-Barsip A.0.102.4.²²⁶⁷ There is also a mention in one of his inscriptions (A.0.102.12:3) of Adad carrying the weapon or whip with which he punished the sea.²²⁶⁸ It is important to note that this mention of the whip carried by Adad was inscribed on a statue of Shalmaneser, which he had dedicated to the Adad or Kurbail, an example of the conflation of the figures of the king and the Storm-God. Adad-Nirari I, whose royal inscriptions mark another noticeable change in the format, also claims to have made his conquests with the "strong weapons of the god Aššur" (^{giš}TUKUL^{meš} *dan-nu-ti šá^d aš-šur*) in A.0.76.3, and he frequently ends his inscriptions with the request that Adad strike the land of his enemy with lightning (*be-ri-iq li-ib-ri-iq*), thus being the first to bring lightning as the weapon of the Storm-God explicitly into the political arena.

In A.0.102.1:11–13, Shalmaneser III likewise describes Aššur as having put in his grasp the "strong weapon (^{giš}TUKUL *dan-nu*) which fells the insubordinate". On the Kurkh monolith (RIMA 3, A.0.102.2: II 59), the king also washes the divine weapons of Aššur, which Rollinger interpreted as the king acting on behalf of the god. He called this text a "variant of the other texts" mentioning the washing of the weapons, implying that he thinks that *all of the Mesopotamian kings* before Shalmaneser III were performing the ritual of the washing of the weapons on behalf of their god.²²⁶⁹ In actuality, it is somewhat of a rarity among the royal inscriptions; hardly every monarch made this claim, and none did it to the same extent as Shalmaneser.

I agree with Rollinger that the king was recreating the god's divine victory by a symbolic re-enactment of the myth of the divine battle, and that this is at

^{GIŠ}TUKUL.meš *aš-šur ez-zu-te ina lib-bi tam-di ú-lil* UDU.SISKUR.meš [*aqqi*] / I parted from the city of Sugunia and arrived at the sea of the land of Nairi; the weapons I washed in the sea; I made offerings to my gods. In those days I made a stele ... I erected it by the sea ... I arrived to the sea of the land of Nairi; I washed the awesome weapons of Aššur in the heart of the sea; [I gave] offerings.

²²⁶⁶ The inscription appears twice on the gates, inscribed on bronze bands. The inscription is likely based on the similar gate inscriptions of his father, Aššurnasirpal II found at the same site. ALAM *ina* UGU A.AB.BA *šá^{KUR} na-i-ri ú-šá-zi-iz* UDU.SISKUR.meš *ana* DINGIR.meš BAL-*qi* / I erected a statue by the great sea of the land of Nairi; I made offerings to the gods.

While this is the whole content of the inscription, Band 78 mentions the erection of a stele and the making of sacrifices "at the mouth of the river", possibly the Tigris.

²²⁶⁷ Conqueror from the land of Nairi to the sea of the setting of the sun: *ka-šid TA tam-di šá^{KUR} na-i-ri a-di* A.AB.BA *šá* SILIM *dšam-še*.

²²⁶⁸ The bearer of the metallic or brazen whip with which he churned the sea: *qi-na-an-zi KÙ mu-sa-an-bi-i' ta-ma-a-te ša-bit*.

²²⁶⁹ Rollinger 2012, 730.

least implicitly intended by the references to the sea in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. Rollinger also pointed out that the concept of the washing of the weapon is not attested in the inscriptions of Mesopotamian kings following Shalmaneser III. He is the end-point of the use of this particular phrase in the literary tradition, if not the tradition *per se*. Rollinger attributed the loss of the ideological background of the ritual to two things: there was no longer a need to conquer the coastal areas after they were converted into provinces of the Empire following Tiglath-Pileser III's reign, and the Mediterranean coast also no longer constituted a border area (or the outer limit) of the Empire, which had been extended beyond Cyprus.²²⁷⁰ I must disagree on several points.

First, I do not think that the ideological background of the Combat Myth was lost, even if physical rituals no longer accompanied it. I attribute the vanishing of physical rituals involving *divine weapons specifically* to the fact that divine weapons had incrementally been losing their practical ritual and judicial functions after the OB period, coinciding with the diminishing prestige of local cult centres, which was caused by the centralization of Assyrian religion into the figure of Aššur (and the figure of Marduk in Babylon). The Combat Myth was still an important facet of royal ideology; it was the *divine weapons* which had lost their significance, and the accompanying ritual with them. As to the provincialization (which was, in part, responsible for the diminishing significance of local cult centres) and the extension of the Empire: according to Malamat,²²⁷¹ Sargon of Agade may already have made an incursion to Cyprus; therefore, extending the borders of the Empire beyond the Mediterranean Sea does not explain the ritual losing "its main ideological background". Indeed, the ideological background of the NWS Combat Myth can still be found hundreds of years later, underlying the legends surrounding the figure of Alexander the Great and his pretensions toward the kingship of Babylon; Alexander's 'world empire', it bears mentioning, extended far beyond the kingdom of any Mesopotamian monarch.

In fact, Rollinger himself gives some later examples of the persistence of the tradition. While he admits that there may have been some "intermediaries" between Shalmaneser and the inscriptions of the Persian King Xusrau, he called the connection between the documents "very speculative" on account of the fact

²²⁷⁰ Rollinger 2012, 732.

²²⁷¹ Malamat 1965, 366.

that they all seem to “miss the significant washing/bathing element of the ritual”.²²⁷² While this may be true for the ritual itself, there is a clear continuation of the tradition of the conquest of the sea (with the Combat Myth as its symbolic backdrop) in the royal inscriptions, which does not end with Shalmaneser. The ritual of the washing of the king’s weapon probably fell out of vogue by the time that the king’s weapons were no longer *actually* considered divine weapons (or containing the divine essence when carried out of the temple *in lieu* of the god’s image), following the increasing astralization of Assyrian divinities.

More than this, the myth of the conquering of the sea was never, or at least not predominantly, about the *physical* conquest of the sea; it was about the divine legitimation of the king’s authority. The re-enactment of the Storm-God’s divine victory in the king’s ability to conquer the coastal regions was merely proof and evidence of this. There may well be a historical background to the events described in the Annals, but the fact that the sequence of events differs from one inscription to another, and that a set of events can be portrayed as having happened in one geographic location in one inscription and in another geographic location in another inscription of the same monarch, is indication enough that the faithful recording of history was not the main function of the inscriptions. The washing of the weapons is symbolic of this victory, and while the Storm-God’s use of the weapons to affect this victory is an important facet of the myth, it is not *integral*.²²⁷³ In fact, both the Biblical texts which I will examine subsequently as well as the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, witness to the increasing abstraction in the development of the mythic tradition.

Shalmaneser III’s grandson Adad-Nirari III mentions the sea in his royal inscription (A.0.104.1), although it is unlikely that the king made it any closer to the coast than his father Šamši-Adad V, who had in turn made no pretensions of having conquered the sea. Their reigns were characterized by the rise of an upper-class of officials, many of whom affected inscriptions similar to the royal inscriptions, thus reflecting the decreased sovereignty of the monarchs and monarchic power, which brought on changes in the ideological expression of the imperial policy. The monograph of Siddall (2013) examined the reign of Adad-Nirari III and his royal ideology in the context of Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda.

²²⁷² Rollinger 2012, 733.

²²⁷³ Contra Rollinger (2012, 735), who claims that “washing the weapons was the central element of the ritual as it had been performed by the Persian king’s Ancient Near Eastern predecessors”.

His thesis was that Adad-Nirari's reign, in opposition to the traditional view, was one of imperial stability brought on by administrative reorganization. But in spite of the possibly diminishing prominence of the Neo-Assyrian monarch, Adad-Nirari follows his epithets and patronage with a claim of conquering "the great sea in the east and the great sea in the west" (TA *tam-tim* GAL-*ti šá* KUR-*ḫa* ^dUTU-*ši a-di tam-tim* GAL-*ti šá šùl-mu* ^dUTU-*ši*)²²⁷⁴, bringing the claim of the conquest of the coasts closer to the very beginning of his inscription even than Shalmaneser.²²⁷⁵

Marching to the Great Sea of the West and the setting up a stele on its shore (in Arwad) are also mentioned in another one of Adad-Nirari's inscriptions (A.104.7:9–10, the Tell Sheikh Hamad stele):²²⁷⁶ *ana tam-tim* GAL-*te šá šùl-me* ^d*šam-ši lu a-lik ša-lam* EN-*tī-ia ina* URU *ar-ma-di ša* MURUB₄ *tam-tim*, "I went to the sea of the setting of the sun. I erected the stele of my rulership in the city of Arwad, in the midst of the sea". The part of this inscription most relevant to the HB is on l. 8, which mentions the tribute paid to the king by Joash (^M*iu- 'a-su*) of the land of the Samaritans.²²⁷⁷ Since the name of this ruler follows in the same portion of the inscription as Jeho's in the Shalmaneser inscriptions, it probably references the Israelite king Joash. It would establish another direct textual link between the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and the Palestinian courts, explaining the appropriation of the terminology and vocabulary of royal inscriptions in Biblical texts.

²²⁷⁴ Literally 'the great sea of the rising of the sun and the great sea of the setting of the sun'.

²²⁷⁵ The conquest of the great Eastern Sea (*tam-tim* GAL-*ti šá na-paḫ* ^dUTU-*ši*) and the great Western Sea (*tam-tim* GAL-*ti šá SILIM-mu* ^dUTU-*ši*) is also mentioned in A.0.104.8:10/13, but they are separated by a list of pacified territories.

²²⁷⁶ A.0.104.1001 probably contains the same text, but it is broken. It is unclear, however, whether the inscription belongs to Aššurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III or Adad-Nirari III.

²²⁷⁷ The same location is referred to as the land of Omri in A.0.104.8:12.

6.4.2.5 Sennacherib: From Sea to Sea and Back Again

It is in the Sargonid kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire that the genre of royal inscriptions reached the culmination of their development.²²⁷⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising that Sargon II's son would have employed the language of Sargon of Agade in the legitimation of his own kingship. It is also during this time that some the traditions may have been transmitted into Hebrew literature, especially regarding the royal inscriptions, although the reign of Sennacherib's youngest son Esarhaddon is probably responsible for the bulk of the tradition. Mention of the sea is found in Sennacherib's prisms. Both Sennacherib and his father had held control over Northern Israel, which was introduced to Assyrian control during the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V, neither of whom had made claims to have conquered the sea.²²⁷⁹

Like his Akkadian namesake, the Assyrian monarch Sargon II (*Šarru-ukin*) was of uncertain ancestry. While he had no relation to Sargon of Agade, he used the latter's name (the meaning of which is "the king is legitimate") to legitimate his kingship. Many of the legends pertaining to Sargon of Agade may have been circulated or even authored during the reign of Sargon II; for obvious reasons, the king encouraged his association with the earlier, legendary king. Sennacherib's own reign was difficult, culminating in his destruction of Babylon after five years of rebellion there, and a Babylonian murder plot against the son he had placed on the throne of Babylon.²²⁸⁰

In the Sennacherib King Prism (RINAP 3:017 col. I 11–17), we find the following:

^d*aš-šur* KUR-ú GAL-ú LUGAL-ut la *ša-na-an*
ú-šat-li-ma-an-ni-ma UGU *gi-mir*
a-šib pa-rak-ki ú-šar-ba-a ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.MEŠ-ia

ul-tu A.AB.BA *e-le-ni-ti*
ša šul-mu ^dUTU-ši *a-di tam-tim šap-li-ti*
ša ši-it ^dUTU-ši
gim-ri šal-mat SAG.DU *ú-šak-niš še-pu-ú-a*

The god Aššur, the great mountain, an
unrivaled kingship he entrusted me; and over
all those who dwell in daises, he made my
weapons powerful,
from the Upper sea
of the setting sun to the Lower sea
of the rising sun,
he brought all the black-headed people to
submit at my feet.

The terminology in the Sennacherib prism has some added variation to the standard phrase of "from the Upper sea to the Lower sea". This expansion of the

²²⁷⁸ So Talon 2005b, 101. An argument could be made in favour of the Persian inscriptions, but this of course depends on whether one bases the acme of the genre on length, wealth and complexity of the imagery, or the amassment of tradition.

²²⁷⁹ The Biblical account of the conquest can be found in 2 Kgs. 17 and 1 Ch. 5.

²²⁸⁰ Nielsen 2012, 8.

phrase may indicate that an earlier text employing the standard phrase was indeed well known to the scribes who authored the inscription. The Upper sea and the Lower sea are also mentioned in Sennacherib 22 i 10–19. Sennacherib 1, 4 makes mention of “the one who strikes enemies with lightning”, which is a phrase seldom found in these royal inscriptions, but which clearly recalls the weapon of the Storm-God and makes an immediately apparent association between the god and the king. Because of Sennacherib’s antagonism toward Babylon and its god Marduk, with whom the Combat Myth was associated with in the Mesopotamia area during this time, it is unsurprising that the language of the mythology is not used in the legitimation of his power to a great extent. The sea features much more prominently in the royal inscriptions of his son, Esarhaddon.

6.4.2.6 Esarhaddon: Drew Him Out of the Sea

Esarhaddon, the youngest son of Sennacherib and grandson of Sargon II, did not have an easy path to kingship – something that he shared with the earlier Mariote king, Zimri-Lim.²²⁸¹ Following his uneasy accession in the wake of a brief civil war in 681 started by the assassination of his father Sennacherib,²²⁸² he fought extensive campaigns on the coast of the Mediterranean and even conquered Lower Egypt.²²⁸³ There is almost certainly a historical basis for most mentions of the sea in relation to his inscriptions. The Assyrian king also accepted Babylonian titulary, although there is evidence that at least some of the scribal elite resisted his kingship of the city. His rule was precarious, both in Babylon and in Assur. According to Nielsen, the uncertainty of Esarhaddon’s reign was the reason why narratives surrounding the recent history between Babylon and Assur needed to be altered, and part of this political programme was the return of Marduk to the city and transmission of this mythology to the “broadest population possible”.

This political programme also meant alterations in the royal inscriptions to minimize Assyrian agency in the destruction of Babylon. This was done in part by mythologizing the events (i.e. with the city having been destroyed by a Flood

²²⁸¹ Bonnet & Merlo 2002, 81.

²²⁸² Nielsen 2012, 8. Sennacherib was reportedly assassinated by his second eldest son, not by Esarhaddon, who had been favoured by the king – or so went the political narrative.

²²⁸³ According to Wyatt 2001, 117, he extended the “imperial boundary much further” than any of his predecessors. Of his successors, Aššurbanipal succeeded in further adding Thebes to the empire.

rather than by Sennacherib diverting the course of the Euphrates).²²⁸⁴ Perhaps it is because of his campaigns to the shore of the Mediterranean that the word ‘sea’ is mentioned several times in his royal inscription.

In Esarhaddon’s Cylinder/Prism A²²⁸⁵ (I 9–18), the king describes himself as the following.²²⁸⁶

<i>ka-šid</i> ^{URU} <i>ši-du-un-ni šá ina MURUB₄ tam-tim</i>	conqueror of Sidon which is in the heart of the sea
<i>sa-pi-nu gi-mir da-ád-me-šú</i>	the overthrower of all its houses
<i>BĀD-šú ú šu-bat-su as-suḥ-ma</i>	its wall and its dwellings I tore down and
<i>qé-reb tam-tim ad-di-i-ma</i>	I threw them in the middle of the sea and
<i>a-šar maš-kán-i-šú ú-ḫal-liq</i>	its place I destroyed
<i>mab-di-mi-il-ku-ut-ti LUGAL-šú</i>	Abdi-Milku, its king
<i>ša la-pa-an</i> ^{GIŠ} <i>TUKUL</i> ^{MES} <i>-ia</i>	who before my weapons
<i>ina MURUB₄ tam-tim in-nab-tu</i>	into the heart of the sea he fled
<i>ki-ma nu-u-ni ul-tu qé-reb tam-tim</i>	like a fish out from the middle of the sea
<i>a-bar-šu-ma ak-ki-sa qa-q-a-su</i>	I drew him and cut off his head

This inscription, though probably embellishing the incidents, pretends to be a historical document. Esarhaddon razed the city of Sidon and renamed it Kar-Aššur-aha-iddina while favouring the neighbouring Tyre, with which he made a treaty of non-aggression (SAA 2:005, formerly ANET 534). The text comes at the end of a series of curses that should follow the breaking of the contract. It is noteworthy that the three Baals named in the treaty are associated with both storm and sea.²²⁸⁷ The similarity of Baal Saphon and Yahweh as destroyers of ships has been suggested as a trait shared by the texts.²²⁸⁸

The crossing of the river is also a feature of Esarhaddon’s inscriptions. According to Nissinen:

the crossing of the river appears as a divinely ordered act of salvation which is not merely part of a military strategy, but constitutes a transition from one phase to another, in Esarhaddon’s case: from the chaotic period of the civil war to the restoration of kingship. The river represents a dangerous liminal space to be traversed before the transition is completed.²²⁸⁹

The performative function of the symbol of the river, being at the same time a geographic and historical point of reference and a facet of the ideological programme, is contextualized in the royal inscriptions and iconography. The river

²²⁸⁴ Nielsen 2012, 9.

²²⁸⁵ Published in RINAP 4.

²²⁸⁶ Cylinder I has slightly different wording: *URU.ši-du-un-nu URU tuk-la-a-ti-šú ša qé-reb tam-tim na-du-ú a-bu-biš as-pu-un BĀD-šú u šu-bat-su as-suḥ-ma qé-reb tam-tim ad-di-ma a-šar maš-kán-šú ú-ḫal-liq mab-di-mil-ku-ut-ti LUGAL-šú la-pa-an GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-ia ina MURUB₄ tam-tim in-na-bit.*

²²⁸⁷ Col. iv 10’–13’ of the treaty features the following lines: *ba-al sa-me-me ba-al ma-la-ge-e ba-al ša-pu-nu / TU₁₅ lem-nu ina* ^{GIŠ}*MĀ-MEŠ-ku-nu lu-šat-ba* ^{GIŠ}*mar-kas-ši-na lip-tu-ur /* ^{GIŠ}*tar-kul-la-ši-na li-is-su-ḫu e-du-u dan-nu ina [tam]-tim / li-ṭa-bi-ši-na šam-ru a-gu-u e-li-ku-nu li-li-[a]* – “May Baal Shamaïm, Baal Malage and Baal Saphon raise an evil wind against your ships, undo their moorings and tear out their mooring pole; may a powerful flood-wave sink them in the sea; may a violent tide rise against you!”

²²⁸⁸ Miller II 2013, 208.

²²⁸⁹ Nissinen 2014, 45.

renews the permanent meaning of historical events in the minds of the audience, while retaining its mythological value as a liminal space.²²⁹⁰ It seems almost to bring us full circle, from the genuine novelty of the narration of Sargon's campaigns, to the utilization of an established trope and its expansion by following kings, all the way down to the description of Esarhaddon's campaigns, where the motif is inarguably dissolved back into historical reality.²²⁹¹ Esarhaddon, whom Judah seems to have recognized as suzerain, is also an important link in the transmission of the tradition, especially the tradition that pertains to the vocabulary of the royal inscriptions.

What is even more curious about Esarhaddon is that one of the inscriptions (Esarhaddon 2004 / RINAP 4) detailing his feats was authored by his mother Naqia, a woman of NWS ancestry. In this building inscription we find the following:

[^m aš-šur-ŠEŠ]-SUM.NA DUMU <i>ši-it lib-bi-ia</i>	[Esarhadd]on, my son, offspring of my heart
<i>ina</i> ^{GIS} .GU.ZA AD-šú <i>ta-biš [ú-ši-bu]</i>	on the throne of his father [he was seated]
[...]	[...]
[<i>ul-tu tam</i>]- <i>tim e-li-ti a-di tam-tim šap-[li-ti]</i>	[from] the Upper [se]a to the Lo[wer] sea
[...] <i>it-tal-la-ku-ma</i>	[...] they constantly went ²²⁹²

It also bears remarking that while Esarhaddon is chronologically the last example of Mesopotamian kings defeating the sea that I discuss in this section, the tradition did not end with him. I will discuss the evidence pertaining to the Persian monarchs of Babylon and Alexander the Great in the subsequent chapter.

What this goes to show is that we are dealing with an extremely long-lived tradition, based at least in part on the political aspirations of Mesopotamian kingdoms toward the economies and resources of the Eastern Mediterranean. While “from the Upper sea to the Lower sea” is a phrase which could be used to invoke the idea of great kingship divorced from any mythic traditions or without any factual basis for the claims, the variation that we find in the expression of this concept indicates that it entailed more than empty pomp and propaganda. Not every Mesopotamian king employed the phrase in their inscriptions, so the use of it may have implied actual presence in the coastal areas, at least some of the time.

²²⁹⁰ Nissinen 2014, 46.

²²⁹¹ Sallaberger (2005, 98) cautioned that the acts of rulers “cannot be recounted in simple historical narrative, even though the historical reality is always mirrored in the texts”. I agree with the sentiment, although the qualifier ‘always’ seems much too strong.

²²⁹² This most likely refers to Esarhaddon and his father, Sennacherib. The verbal form indicates that they did this habitually, insinuating that their greatness far surpassed that of their predecessors.

While it is possible that at least to a certain extent this language of legitimation employed the mythological backdrop of the battle of the Storm-God against the sea, what I suggest is that the opposite also held true. The myth was founded in historical reality and political realities.

Rollinger remarked on the ‘uncanny similarities’ of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions in their description of the ritual of the washing of the weapon by the sea, stating that they are remarkable in the agreement of the location and ideological context of the ritual acts.²²⁹³ He proceeded to ruminate on the different terms used in the inscriptions to describe the washing of the weapons, pointing out a shift in the vocabulary used from Old Akkadian sources to the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. According to him, “there is no doubt that the actions performed by the king have to be analysed as ostentatious ritual performances with a highly distinctive meaning”.

Rollinger’s “Old Akkadian” sources (most of which date to the OB period) use the verb *mesûm*, sometimes written with the Sumerian logogram LU₂, while the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions use the verb *ullulu(m)*; the latter verb points to a ritual and cultic context, according to Rollinger. While a ritual may be implied (and one may well have been implied even by the OB inscriptions), it does not follow that one necessarily took place, because what we are dealing with is a *literary* tradition. His argument that the Old Akkadian inscriptions would have forgone a mention of the sacrifices performed in conjunction with this ritual due to the “brevity of the text” is also somewhat ill-founded. If the mention of the offerings had been significant, it would have been recorded. I submit that it bespeaks the growing of the tradition over time and the adding of elements to the literary tradition – and perhaps even the hypothetically corresponding ritual tradition. I do agree with Rollinger that the minor differences in the texts should not affect the conclusion that they are a part of the same tradition, but the tradition of which we have actual evidence is the literary tradition.²²⁹⁴

²²⁹³ Rollinger (2012, 734, 736) even goes so far as to compare the Neo-Assyrian texts and Procopius’ account of the Persian King Khusrau I (*Hist.* 2.5.1–13, 29), claiming that not only were the “set of rituals” identical, but “also the ideological background as well as the specific situation, not to forget the specific location where the rituals were performed”. This is overstating the evidence; we have severely limited information on the first, speculative evidence of the second, and no knowledge whatsoever of the last. He also states that, “all texts dealing with this set of rituals may offer slightly different perspective on one and the same action”. This is difficult to prove, since we know very little about the physical acts of the rituals, and can only speculate on the ideological constellations accompanying them.

²²⁹⁴ Rollinger 2012, 729.

One must also consider the intended audience of these texts and the intended audience for the rituals which may have accompanied or occasioned them. Porter (2000) suggested that the intended audience was the subject peoples and populations of the Assyrian Empire. None of Esarhaddon's inscriptions have been found in the area of Palestine (the closest so far is the one found near the mouth of the Nahr el-Kalb River in the area of modern Lebanon), but this is no reason to assume that the scribes of a subject population would not have been educated in the content of these inscriptions. Nielsen brought up the important point that it was mainly the literate scribal elite who would have come into contact with these inscriptions, which preserved and transmitted social memories. Impressing the same ideologies on illiterate populations who did not possess the cultural artefacts of the scribal elite would have required performative, repetitive ritual acts tied to the monuments themselves, functioning as public projections of the past.²²⁹⁵

While it cannot precisely be described as a scribal tradition, the text of royal inscriptions seems to be recreated generation after generation. The inscriptions employ similar language and vocabulary, copying phrases from older inscriptions. The inscriptions may have mirrored reality in that the kings may also have set out to recreate the feats and acts described in the inscriptions of their predecessors, but it is not necessary that they did – it is only necessary that the inscriptions portrayed history as the kings desired to present it, regardless of what had actually transpired. Nielsen mentioned a subtext to Esarhaddon's inscriptions (as well as those of his successors) of a literary composition pertaining to a monarch that had ruled Babylon centuries before Esarhaddon's reign, the Marduk Prophecy.²²⁹⁶

Rollinger suggested that the rituals and the steles that commemorated them were intended to be witnessed by the king's army and the conquered peoples themselves (as well as "those people at home among whom the king's deeds were circulated").²²⁹⁷ The rituals may have been witnessed by these people, but I doubt that they were the *intended* audience of the texts. The intended audience for the rituals may well have been contemporary, and I agree that the king's armies were

²²⁹⁵ Nielsen 2012, 5–6.

²²⁹⁶ Nielsen 2012, 12–13.

²²⁹⁷ Rollinger 2012, 731. According to him, "the local inhabitants surely understood both acts as a demonstration of the sweeping Assyrian power". On the contrary, local inhabitants may have been privy to neither the ritual nor the textual contents of the stelae, and the sweeping Assyrian power would have been demonstrated by the presence of the troops themselves.

probably the foremost among them. But while royal inscriptions were often *addressed* to the gods, the king's *successors* were the intended audience.²²⁹⁸ Neither the audience of the texts nor necessarily their recorders were present at the performance of the acts described in the inscriptions. The inscriptions were not intended as historical documents, but as eulogies of the king for future kings. What the inscriptions recorded was a political performance, and whether these political performances were based on reality is secondary. The tradition of using this political mythology in the legitimization of power also continued after the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

6.4.2.7 Alexander the Great: Bulls for Poseidon

This section discusses the use of the ANE myths of divine combat featuring the sea in the later Alexandrine romances, which serve as an example of the later use of the myth in royal legitimization. Alexander's mythographers made use of the motif in order to make him appear as the legitimate king of Babylon, even though the underlying myth itself may have been lost on them. As noted in section 6.3.4, the tradition, if not the context, was well known to Hellenistic authors. Rollinger mentioned a ritual performed by Alexander in which he modelled the sacrifice on the precedent of the Persian Darius, recorded in Herodotus' *Histories*. Rollinger also mentioned texts in which Alexander is claimed to have erected altars and made sacrifices by rivers,²²⁹⁹ in which either the textual or the ritual tradition may owe influence to the Neo-Assyrian traditions. He dismissed these texts on the basis that they do not mention the element of the washing of the weapon.

While the lacking of this particular element is not enough to warrant the conclusion that they are not part of the same tradition as the Neo-Assyrian texts, it seems that they are somewhat removed from the ideological background of the

²²⁹⁸ According to Nielsen 2012, 6, the literary texts also facilitated communication between the scribal elite and the imperial households, while being "insufficient for shaping the opinions of the broad citizenry".

²²⁹⁹ Rollinger 2012, 732. He mentioned the following texts: Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 17, 95; Plutarch of Chaeronea, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander the Great*, 62; Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 9, 4 & 13; Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* 12, 8; Pliny, *Natural History*, 6, 49 & 62; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tana*, 2, 43; and Arrian of Nicomedia, *Anabasis Alexandri*, 5, 29, 1f. The works of Diodorus, Plutarch, Curtius, Justin, and Arrian are the main surviving accounts of Alexander's life and exploits, and at least Arrian and Plutarch may well have been influenced by ANE motifs.

conquering of the sea. Whereas the mythological motif may have influenced the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, these Alexandrine traditions may simply recreate Persian traditions which owe to Neo-Assyrian traditions.²³⁰⁰ However, what Rollinger did connect to the Neo-Assyrian and Persian inscriptions is the mention in Arrian's *Anabasis* (6,19) of Alexander having performed sacrifices ("the same intrinsic ritual already performed by Darius I according to Herodotus") by the sea.²³⁰¹

There are three mentions of sacrifices in this chapter of the *Anabasis*: the first is to gods, assigned by the priests of the Egyptian temple of Ammon through their oracular instructions. The second set is to "other gods in another manner", also by means of the instruction of the Ammonite priests. Alexander is then reported to have made sacrifices of bulls to Poseidon, which he cast into the sea with a golden libation cup and bowls as "thanks-offerings" for safe passage through the sea. While the Persian traditions specifically may have influenced these passages, there are a few problems with the direct correspondence of Alexander's sacrifices and the sacrifices mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. Firstly, because Alexander appears to have made three different types of sacrifice, assigning a single source to them is difficult. Furthermore, the text itself mentions an Egyptian origin for the traditions; as I will discuss in a subsequent section, the Egyptian conceptions of the Combat Myth differ from the Mesopotamian and Eastern Mediterranean conceptions, while possibly owing some influence to the NWS traditions.

If Alexander – or, at the very least, his historiographers – believed that he was following Egyptian rather than Persian customs, we are hard-pressed to contradict them. It appears that the sacrifice to Poseidon was also made from the ship itself, a practice which is not found in any Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. And yet, in the description of the sacrifice, we may have a rare glimpse of what exactly transpired during these rituals: a libation was poured on the bulls, the bulls were slaughtered, and then both bulls and vessels were given to the sea. I also agree with Rollinger's assessment of the purpose of the ritual: it was surely a "concerted

²³⁰⁰ Edelman (2009, 96) discussed elements from the Semitic Baal and Marduk myths in the Zoroastrian *Yasht*.

²³⁰¹ Rollinger 2012, 732. Herodotus mentions the rituals in *Histories* iv 44, iv 85. The Neo-Assyrian inscriptions with which Rollinger connects the ("identical") ritual are RIMA 2 A.0.87.3: 21–25, RIMA 2, A.0.89.7: iv 2f., RIMA 3, A.0.102.6: ii 33; A.0.102. 8: 19'; A.0.102.2: ii 77. He also goes on to suggest that this same tradition was adopted by certain Roman officials via Alexander, setting up altars by the Strait of Gibraltar, Cape Finisterre and Alto da Vigia, all at the westernmost edge of the world at the time.

staging of the king to show his abilities to expand his sway even beyond the limits of the world”.²³⁰² Whether the Combat Myth was consciously or subconsciously read into these sacrifices is impossible to know, but the source of the tradition was likely in the Persian monarchs of Babylon.

There is evidence, for example, of the 6th-century Persian king Cyrus the Great who, upon conquering the city of Babylon from Nabonidus, declared himself “king of Sumer and Agade” and “king of the four corners of the world” in language reminiscent of legendary Mesopotamian kings. In the so-called Cyrus Cylinder (28–29), he also claims to rule all the kings from the Upper sea to the Lower sea, whom he ordered to bring him heavy tribute and kiss his feet in Babylon. Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (I 9) contains a description of Cyrus as the ideal king, and this text may have been known to Alexander’s historians (possibly even influencing Aristotle’s criteria for the ideal king in *Politics* III, esp. Part XIV), who based their description of Alexander on his correspondence with ideal Mesopotamian kingship. Literary influence is one option; the other of course being that Alexander himself imitated Cyrus and recreated his acts and persona, whether consciously or subconsciously.

In the Daiva Inscription, Xerxes in turn also boasts of having conquered the people on this side of the sea and on that side of the sea. Darius (I 19), in his inscription, drives his enemy into the water, and the water bears them away. Note also that while there is both historiographic (*Hist.* 2.158) and archaeological evidence²³⁰³ to corroborate Darius’ claim of having constructed a canal from the river to the sea (the Nile to the Red Sea), the conquest from the river to the sea is already found in Aššurnasirpal’s inscription, predating the physical acts in the real world. While Darius may have physically completed the feat, the topos was older than his inscription, and the inscriptions of past rulers may even have functioned as the inspiration of the feat. While Cyrus has usually been read as the topic of the Deutero-Isaiahic chapters 40–52, Alberz argued for the understanding of Darius as the actual referent.²³⁰⁴ Both Persian rulers used the same language of royal propaganda, which again shows the plasticity of the tradition with regard to historical contexts.

Edelman discussed the ideological programme of the Persian Empire and

²³⁰² Rollinger 2012, 732.

²³⁰³ See C. A. Redmount, *The Wadi Tumilat and the ‘Canal of the Pharaohs’* in JNES 45 (1995).

²³⁰⁴ Alberz 2003, 371–383.

its desire to frame itself as a continuation of the previous Mesopotamian empires, using their “well-established system of propagandistic iconography” to advance their own political influence in newly conquered territories. In order to keep the subjugated kingdoms at bay, they used old and traditional symbolic displays of “power, might, and glory of the ruling empire on monumental art”.²³⁰⁵ In the Nabonidus cylinder from Sippar, Nabonidus himself mentions the Upper and the Lower sea, claiming to have mustered his troops from them; this probably served as the immediate prototype for the inscriptions of Cyrus. While Esarhaddon is the more probable source for the Biblical texts employing this tradition, some of the texts may also have been making use of these later traditions.

Rollinger also mentioned rituals performed by Xerxes at the Hellespont before the crossing of the Persian army, described in Herodotus’ *Histories* (7.35–54), which Rollinger believed had an ANE background.²³⁰⁶ In this ritual, Xerxes pours a libation from a golden cup into the sea and afterwards tosses the cup and a golden bowl into the water; this is reminiscent of Alexander’s sacrifice to Poseidon (the offer of a cup by Yamm or to Yamm in KTU 1.1 IV has been discussed by Belnap: “the cup of Yamm may demonstrate his validity and power to be king”).²³⁰⁷ But in addition to Alexander’s offerings, he also threw a Persian sword (*akinakes*) into the sea, bringing together once more the idea of washing a weapon in the sea and making sacrifices to it. Interestingly, Xerxes also seems to have flagellated the sea and plunged shackles into it, which Rollinger understands as a “totally misunderstood example of a ritual where the washing of the weapons has been involved”, but which I see *in perfect accordance* with the Storm-God’s punishing of the sea in the Combat Myth.

Rollinger also submitted that the accounts in Herodotus are different from the Neo-Assyrian accounts in that they mark the beginning of a military campaign rather than its end, which he argued is a “Herodotean play with Ancient Near Eastern traditions”. He further states: “Again a military commander is launching a campaign deep into foreign regions without being able to conquer or provincialize these territories”.²³⁰⁸ I would issue more caution regarding assertions of which stages of a campaign the rituals marked in the ANE. What we do know is that the rituals seem to have been performed when the shore of a sea was reached, and

²³⁰⁵ Edelman 2009, 103.

²³⁰⁶ Rollinger 2012, 733.

²³⁰⁷ Belnap 2011, 48–49.

²³⁰⁸ Rollinger 2012, 733, 738.

during which stage of the campaign this happened seems incidental. The prompting of the ritual by the inability of ancient Mesopotamian rulers to provincialize the areas they reached is an interesting proposition, but it does not explain why the Neo-Assyrian rulers continued this practice. The historicity of the account suffers from the same problems as all of Herodotus' historiography, in that it does not provide very reliable or accurate depictions of historical accounts. On the other hand, in his writings we do have evidence of the motif surviving in the literary tradition. And within this literary tradition, Herodotus may well have been playing with existing motifs.

The fact that a similar theme of the cleaving of the sea is also known to us from a later historical era, in connection with both the Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca on the river Bagradas²³⁰⁹ and Alexander himself on the Pamphylian sea,²³¹⁰ does not mean that the theme of the crossing of the sea was completely stripped of its mythological dimensions even in these historical or historicizing narratives. Note also that in the *Histories* of Herodotus (1.75–76), his description of the Battle of Pteria between the Lydian King Croesus and the Persian Cyrus seems to present us with an inversion of the narrative: while Croesus had caused the waters of the river to be diverted in order to attack the Persians, the Lydian king is forced to cross the River Halys upon his defeat. The historian himself believed that the Lydian army crossed the river by natural means, but he reports a belief by the Greeks that Thales of Miletus had caused the river to be split into two streams for the army to be able to march across it.

It seems that occasionally the motif of the primal battle was transferred into historical time.²³¹¹ While historicizing mythology is one way in which mythological narratives can be passed on, it is also possible for history to become mythologized, as seen in the figure of Sargon. Alexander the Great may have been wholly unaware that in performing rituals to legitimize his rule over Babylon he was retreading the footsteps of Sargon the Great, the greatest monarch to have

²³⁰⁹ Recorded in Polybius' *Hist.* 1.75.7–10, in which he recounts the following: “[Hamilcar] had noticed that when the wind blew strongly from certain quarters the mouth of the river got silted up and the passage became shallow just where it falls into the sea. He therefore got his force ready to march out, and keeping his project to himself, waited for this to occur. When the right time came he started from Carthage at night, and without anyone noticing him, had by daybreak got his army across at the place mentioned”.

²³¹⁰ Segert 1994, 199–200. The Alexandrine motif is found in Strabo's *Geo.* 14.3.9: “Alexander came [to the Pamphylian sea] when there was a storm, and trusting generally to fortune, set out before the sea had receded, and the soldiers marched during the whole day up to the middle of the body in water”. The same Alexander episode is recorded by Josephus in *Ant.* 2.16.5.

²³¹¹ See Mowinckel 1950, 81; Day 1985, 88–140; Kloos 1986, 171–190; Van Henten 1999, 265.

ever lived presenting himself as the greatest monarch to have ever lived, with both kings having conquered all that there was to conquer. It may well be that a known mythological motif was used to build up the heroic exploits of these historical leaders. It could even be that the Exodus-narrative of the cleaving of the sea is what actually lies behind at least the Alexander narrative of Josephus (*Ant.* 2.16.5):

This Callisthenes wrote how the Pamphylian Sea not only opened a passage for Alexander but, by rising and lifting up its waters, did pay him homage as its king.²³¹²

²³¹² Josephus actually records four sources for the episode, Strabo among them, to emphasize its historicity. Note that Josephus explicitly connected the motif with kingship.

6.4.3 Summary and Discussion

The witness of the royal inscriptions may be summarized as follows:

King	City	Reign	Sea
Lugal-zage-si	Uruk	22 nd c. BCE	From the Lower sea to the Upper sea via Euphrates and Tigris
Sargon	Agade	22 nd c. BCE	From the Upper sea to the Lower sea, washed weapon in the sea
Naram-Sin	Babylon	21 st c. BCE	From the Upper sea to the Lower sea, washed weapon in the sea
Šu-sin	Ur	20 th c. BCE	From the Upper sea to the Lower sea
Yahdun-Lim	Mari	19 th c. BCE	Went to the shore of the sea, offered royal sacrifices to the sea, troops washed in the sea
Šamši-Adad I	Shubat-Enlil	18 th c. BCE	Placed name and stele on the shore of the sea
Zimri-Lim	Mari	18 th c. BCE	Given the weapons with which the Storm-God defeated the sea
<i>Hammurapi</i>	<i>Babylon</i>	<i>18th c. BCE</i>	<i>Fought above and below</i>
Tiglath-Pileser I	Assur	11 th c. BCE	Slayed the Nahiru in the sea, from the Upper sea to the Sea of Nairi
Aššur-bel-kala	Assur	11 th c. BCE	Slayed the Nahiru in the sea, from the Upper sea to the Sea of Nairi
Aššurnasirpal II	Assur	9 th c. BCE	Washed weapon in the sea, made sacrifices to the sea
Šalmaneser III	Assur	9 th c. BCE	Washed weapon in the sea, made sacrifices to the sea Conqueror from the Upper sea and the Lower sea up to the great sea of the setting sun Placed stele on the shore of the sea
Adad-Nirari III	Assur	9 th c. BCE	Marched to the sea, dominion from the Great (Eastern) sea to the Western sea
Sennacherib	Assur	8 th c. BCE	From the Upper sea of the setting sun to the Lower sea of the rising sun
Esarhaddon	Assur	7 th c. BCE	From the top of the Upper sea to the Lower sea, gathered the kings of the coast of the sea and the kings from the middle of the sea pulled king of Sidon out of the sea like a fish
Nabonidus	Babylon/Tayma	6 th c. BCE	Mustered his troops from the Upper sea and the Lower sea
Cyrus II	Babylon	6 th c. BCE	Kings from the Upper sea to the Lower sea brought him tribute

One can see from the table that there was a *resurgence* of using the myth in the legitimation of royal ideology in the Neo-Assyrian period, beginning with Aššurnasirpal II. The dynasty used the figure of Sargon of Agade and his reign quite openly as a source of legitimation of their power and as the basis of their royal ideology and propaganda. One needs only to look at the figure of Sargon II,

who certainly did not fashion his kingship after Sargon I of Assyria – who himself is known for little else than having been named after the Agadean Sargon.²³¹³

Rollinger discussed the temporal aspect of these inscriptions, pointing out that in the case of Shalmaneser, the inscriptions can be dated to the first year of his reign and his first campaign to the Mediterranean.²³¹⁴ While I likewise find this significant, it is not the temporal aspect of the inscriptions in itself which seems curious, but their function. Royal inscriptions of these kinds were called upon when rule demanded legitimation; the more difficult the position of the monarch, the more legitimation was needed to consolidate his rule. This may – and often did – coincide with the first years of a monarch's rule, but it was the uncertainty of their authority and rule that created the need for legitimating royal inscriptions, not the beginning of a reign as such. There were other causes for the instability of a king's realm, from war to famine to political unrest to the death of an heir, all of which may similarly have necessitated propagandistic feats and inscriptions. What seems to be found in these traditions is a sort of *legitimation loop*: 1) a mythology sprang from an actual desire and necessity to conquer coastal regions; this mythology was then used to 2) legitimize monarchic power, which in turn was 3) confirmed by the conquest of coastal regions – a symbolic conquest of the sea. But which came first? Was the conquest of the sea mythologized, or was it because of the myth that the sea needed to be conquered? Was Akkadian expansionism the impetus of the myth or an excuse for the same?

What I do agree with Rollinger on wholeheartedly is the persistence of the tradition:

The documentation of the ritual in the cuneiform sources over about 1500 years can be qualified as a noteworthy example for the persistence of tradition and the ideological programmes in the Ancient Near East.²³¹⁵

Of course, it can be questioned whether the washing of the weapons and the conquest of the land from 'sea to sea' are in fact used to describe one and the same tradition, and whether the washing of the weapons in the OB period can be directly linked to the later attestations of the concept in the Neo-Assyrian period. For the latter, the phrasing of the concept itself is so similar that one can only

²³¹³ There are two short inscriptions to his name, A.0.35.1, A.0.35.2001.

²³¹⁴ Rollinger 2012, 728. He stresses the importance of these crucial first years for the self-image and royal ideologies of Assyrian kings.

²³¹⁵ Rollinger 2012, 732. On p. 736, he further remarks that this continuity of tradition was not an ethnic phenomenon, but a cultural one. Certainly the tradition became 'Mesopotamian' over the course of history, but we must not forget that it sprang from ancient Semitic (perhaps even specifically ancient NWS) conceptions.

assume that the Neo-Assyrian scribes were aware of the OB inscriptions, whether or not the tradition itself had an undisrupted succession from monarch to monarch. Evidence for this is found not only in the scribal curriculum, or the fact that the stelae which survive to modern day must also have existed in the world of the Neo-Assyrian, but in the actual practice of unearthing the foundation-stone inscriptions of previous monarchs in palaces, which allowed kings direct contact with the royal inscriptions of their predecessors. The borrowing and use of the language and legitimation of previous kings was an established practice in the ANE.

Next I will examine motifs and vocabulary shared by the poetry of the psalms and the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions discussed in the previous section. No detailed analysis of the Biblical texts and the context of the phrases within the passages is to follow, as I have argued that the myth itself is not present in the texts; instead there follows an overview of the use of the terminology. Phrases that we find in the Mesopotamian inscriptions include “from sea to sea” (TA *tam-di a-di tam-di*), “from the sea to the river” (TA *tam-di a-di ÍD*)²³¹⁶, “the great sea” (*tam-di GAL-ti*), “shore of the sea” (*ši-di tam-di*), “midst of the sea” (MURUB₄ *tam-di*), and “the heart of the seas” (*i-na ŠÀ-bi tam-di*).²³¹⁷

While many phrases familiar from the inscriptions can be found in the poetic texts of the HB, there are also phrases which one might expect to find in the same context but are missing, such as the washing of the weapons in the sea and the placing of the stele on the seashore. One of the anthropomorphizing phrases found in the HB (but not in the royal inscriptions) is the description of the seashore as the “lip of the sea” (שֶׁפֶת הַיָּם) in Ex. 14:30. Of course, it must be born in mind that the idea of the conquering of the Mediterranean coast would seem very different in inland locations such as Babylon, compared to Jerusalem or other cities of the Levantine littoral, let alone actual coastal cities like Ugarit, where the idea of the washing of the weapons and the setting up of stelae are also missing.

The sea and the river form a word-pair in NWS poetry, often featured in parallel. The parallelism of ‘sea’ and ‘river’ is one of the most striking points of

²³¹⁶ Usually the phrase is found in connection with a lake (‘interior sea’) and the Marratu River. E.g. A.O.102.29: “From the sea of the land of Zamua of the interior to the sea of the land of the Chaldeans, which (is) the river Marratu”.

²³¹⁷ The Sumerogram MURUB₄, the preposition used in connection with the sea in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions with the meaning of middle or midst was also originally anthropomorphic, referring to female genitalia; however, the word took on a prepositional meaning already in Sumerian.

connection between the Biblical texts and the royal inscriptions. The relationship of sea and river is of special concern to this dissertation, so I have grouped the texts featuring this parallelism here. Curiously, much of the textual evidence in the HB where the sea could ostensibly be linked with the idea of kingship features the river in connection with the sea. The pair are also connected in mythology as the epithets of Prince Sea, Judge River. The parallelism of sea and river is an ancient mythological theme, and it is entirely possible that the composers of the oldest layers of Hebrew poetry were conscious of its mythological contents.²³¹⁸

Not every instance of the parallelism of sea and river bespeaks a mythological conception of the phenomena, however. It also functioned as a natural poetic word-pair, which can be seen, e.g. in Ecc. 1:7: “All the rivers flow *into the sea*, yet *the sea is not full*. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again”. There is also some semantic overlap between the ideas of sea and river, at least in the Mesopotamian area. For example, the Chaldean Sea (*tam-di šá^{kur}kal-di*) is also called the Bitter River (*id^{mar}-ra-tu*), e.g. A.O.102.8:38–39. The parallelism of sea and river is found in the following verses, which also display other features familiar from royal inscriptions, such as geographic locations and the setting of boundaries: Ex. 23:31,²³¹⁹ Num. 34:3, 5–7,²³²⁰ 11–12,²³²¹ Dt. 3:17,²³²² 4:49,²³²³ 11:24,²³²⁴ Dt. 33:23²³²⁵ does not contain the parallelism, but nonetheless features the delineating function of the sea to mark borders. The passage of Dt. 34:1–4²³²⁶

²³¹⁸ Dozeman 1996, 413.

²³¹⁹ “And I will fix your boundary *from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines*, and from the wilderness to the *River Euphrates*; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.”

²³²⁰ “Your southern sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern border shall extend from the end of the *Salt Sea* eastward [...] And the border shall turn direction from Azmon to the *brook of Egypt*, and its termination shall be *at the sea*. As for the Western border, you shall have the *Great Sea*, that is, its coastline; this shall be your west border. And this shall be your north border: you shall draw your border line from the *Great Sea* to Mount Hor.

²³²¹ “And the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down and reach to the slope on the east side of the *Sea of Chinnereth*. And the border shall go down to the *Jordan* and its termination shall be *at the Salt Sea*. This shall be your land according to its borders all around”.

²³²² “The Arabah also, with the *Jordan as a border*, from Chinnereth even as far as the *sea of the Arabah*, the *Salt Sea*, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah on the east”.

²³²³ “With all the Arabah *across the Jordan* to the east, even as far as the *sea of the Arabah*, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.”

²³²⁴ “Every place on which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours; your border shall be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and *from the river, the river Euphrates*, as far as the *Western Sea*”.

²³²⁵ “And of Naphtali he said, “O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, And full of the blessing of Yahweh, Take possession of *the sea* and the south”.

²³²⁶ And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that [is] over against Jericho. *And Yahweh showed him all the land from river of Egypt, unto the*

is interesting, as the version from the Samaritan Pentateuch omits vv. 2–3. It is likely that the shorter version is the more original and that a piece of a royal inscription was inserted into the verse at a later stage. The reason for the insertions must have been an ideological programme involving the marking of the borders of the Kingdom.

The Book of Joshua understandably deals with the setting of the borders of the land, so it is unsurprising to find many phrases from the royal inscriptions in the text.²³²⁷ But to interpret the texts as merely describing geographic features is to misconstrue the ideological content in the demarcation of borders via bodies of water. We find phrases which are familiar from Mesopotamian inscriptions in: Josh. 1:4,²³²⁸ 5:1,²³²⁹ 9:1,²³³⁰ 12:3,²³³¹ 13:27,²³³² 15:2,²³³³ 15:4–5,²³³⁴ 15:11–12,²³³⁵ 15:46–47,²³³⁶ 16:3,²³³⁷ 16:8,²³³⁸ 17:9,²³³⁹ 17:10,²³⁴⁰ 18:19,²³⁴¹ 19:29,²³⁴² 23:4,²³⁴³

great river, river Euphrates, and unto the utmost sea and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then Yahweh said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there".

²³²⁷ The river Jordan as a boundary in the Book of Joshua (and Num. 32) has been discussed by Jobling 1980.

²³²⁸ "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as *the great river, the river Euphrates*, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as *the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun*, will be your territory".

²³²⁹ "Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who were *beyond the Jordan* to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were *by the sea*, heard how Yahweh had *dried up the waters of the Jordan* before the sons of Israel until they had *crossed*, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer, because of the sons of Israel".

²³³⁰ "Now it came about when all the kings who were *beyond the Jordan*, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the *Great Sea toward Lebanon*, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it –".

²³³¹ "And the Arabah as far as the *Sea of Chinneroth toward the east*, and as far as the *sea of the Arabah*, even the *Salt Sea*, eastward toward Beth-Jeshimoth, and on the south, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah,".

²³³² "And in the valley, Beth-Haram and Beth-Nimrah and Succoth and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the *Jordan as a border*, as far as the lower end of the *Sea of Chinnereth* beyond the *Jordan to the east*".

²³³³ "And their south border was from the lower end of the *Salt Sea*, from the bay that turns to the south".

²³³⁴ "And it continued to Azmon and proceeded to the *brook of Egypt*; and the border *ended at the sea*. This shall be your south border. And the east border was the *Salt Sea*, as far as the mouth of the *Jordan*. And the border of the north side was from the *bay of the sea* at the mouth of the *Jordan*".

²³³⁵ "And the border proceeded to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border curved to Shikkeron and continued to Mount Baalah and proceeded to Jabneel, and the border *ended at the sea*. And the west border was at the *Great Sea*, even its coastline. This is the border around the sons of Judah according to their families".

²³³⁶ "From Ekron even *to the sea*, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages. Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; as far as the *brook of Egypt* and the *Great Sea*, even its coastline".

²³³⁷ "And it went down westward to the territory of the Japhletites, as far as the territory of lower Beth-Horon even to Gezer, and it *ended at the sea*".

²³³⁸ "From Tappuah the border continued westward to the *brook of Kanah*, and it *ended at the sea*. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Ephraim according to their families [...]".

1 Kgs. 10:22,²³⁴⁴ 2 Kgs 14:25,²³⁴⁵ and 2 Chr. 2:16.²³⁴⁶ The most significant connections to the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions are in the passages that list cities and locations on the Levantine littoral, the passages that employ the term “the sea of the setting of the sun”, and the mention of the exotic animals connected with these coastal cities.

One of the main features of royal inscriptions was to delineate or circumscribe the borders of the kingdom, which in ANE geography usually entailed the recounting of cities and the mention of landmarks such as mountains and bodies of water. Ultimately this had been the reason for the description of Sargon’s conquest of the sea in the OB period. There are several texts in the HB which seem to make use of this ideology. The course of the Upper Euphrates was described as the northern border of the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18; Dt. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4). David, in fact, is presented as having extended his military influence to its banks during the height of his power (2 Sam. 8:3; 10:16–18; 1 Kgs 4:24). Terms like “the river”, “the flood”, “the great river”, and “beyond the river” (Josh. 24:2–3; Ezra 4:10–13; Neh. 2:7–9) have been used to refer to the Euphrates, historically a significant political and geographical boundary, although not all of the references to rivers are necessarily to that one.

In demarcating borders, the references in the HB to the sea as a cardinal direction may hold some connection to the ideology. In Ps. 107:3 we find: “He gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the sea”. Loretz believed that there once existed traditional “Canaanite songs of thanksgiving”, of which Ps. 107 is an example.²³⁴⁷ In the psalm, the sea

²³³⁹ “And the border went down to the *brook of Kanah*, southward of *the brook* (these cities belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Maseh), and the border of Maseh was on the north side of the brook, and it *ended at the sea*”.

²³⁴⁰ “The south side belonged to Ephraim and the north side to Maseh, and *the sea was their border*; and they reached to Asher on the north and to Issachar on the east”.

²³⁴¹ “And the border continued to the side of Beth-hoglah northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the *Salt Sea*, at the south end of *the Jordan*. This was the south border”.

²³⁴² “And the border turned to Ramah, and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and it *ended at the sea* by the region of Achzib.”

²³⁴³ “See, I have apportioned to you these nations which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off, *from the Jordan* even to the *Great Sea toward the setting of the sun*”.

²³⁴⁴ “For the king had *at sea* the ships of *Tarshish* with the ships of Hiram; once every three years the ships of Tarshish came bringing *gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks*”.

²³⁴⁵ “He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the *Sea of the Arabah*, according to the word of Yahweh, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher”.

²³⁴⁶ “And we will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon, and bring it to you on rafts by *sea to Joppa*, so that you may carry it up to Jerusalem”.

²³⁴⁷ Loretz 1990, 178.

seems by omission to refer to the direction of south, but it is also juxtaposed with north and Mount Saphon, referencing perhaps a symbolic geography.²³⁴⁸ The same is true of many of the passages in which ‘the ends of the earth’ are paralleled with ‘the distant seas’ (i.e. the world’s end). In this verse, however, the sea is not anthropomorphized.

A cardinal direction seems to also be indicated by Ps. 139:9: “If I should take the wings of the morning, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea”.²³⁴⁹ One curious facet connecting the passage to NWS mythology, if not outright to kingship, is the presentation of Yamm as a winged god in ancient Syrian iconography. The main characteristics of the figure represented in cylinder seals are wings, weapons (of which one is a curved sickle sword), and the element of water. The question of why the divinity associated with the sea was presented with wings has not been resolved, but the case for associating this being with Yamm has been convincingly argued by Matthiae.²³⁵⁰ While the verses may employ ancient NWS poetic language, they do not explicitly reference the Combat Myth or explicitly speak of kingship. A note must be made, however, of the mention of the hand and the arm in v. 10. Vv. 7–10 form a whole, which is comprised of four bicola. In v. 9 the speaker ponders where he could hide from the presence of Yahweh. He then concludes that whether he should try to hide in the heavens, Sheol, the far horizon or the end of the sea, the hand of Yahweh would lead him there and his right arm would hold him back.

A military interpretation for the terms ‘hand’ and ‘right arm’ is fitting, as the psalm continues in vv. 12–13 with the description of the darkness of Yahweh and the reins he has made for the speaker. The idea of the arm of the divinity leading the king to the ends of the world could also find its ideological background in the royal inscriptions. The psalm speaks of the complete and absolute omniscience of Yahweh, but the vocabulary it employs is similar to what we find e.g. in Ps. 95. Other points of connection between the psalm and the Ugaritic texts have been discussed (e.g. by Dahood and Loretz).²³⁵¹ Possible references to the Combat Myth are also found in several prophetic books. Some of

²³⁴⁸ The word 𐤍 usually means ‘west’, so it is possible that the passage originally read 𐤍𐤏, which has the meaning of ‘south’. Day (2000, 108, 112) suggested that the words may have been conflated from time to time.

²³⁴⁹ Loretz 1979, 338, favours the interpretation of the phrase as meaning the furthest points in the east and the west.

²³⁵⁰ Matthiae 1992.

²³⁵¹ Dahood 1970, 285–287; Loretz 1979, 341–342.

these – particularly in the books of Jeremiah and Isaiah – are overt references to the Combat Myth, as I have already discussed in previous chapters.

There are, however, references in several prophetic books, particularly in Ezekiel, which seem to owe influence to Mesopotamian royal inscriptions.²³⁵² Especially pertinent is the phrase “from the Eastern sea to the Western sea” (אַל־הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרִיּוֹן (הַיָּם הַקֶּדְמוֹנִי וְהָאַחֲרִיּוֹן), recalling the stock-phrase “From the Upper sea to the Lower sea”, but also “heart of the sea” (לֵב יָם). The latter phrase, particularly its occurrences in the Book of Ezekiel, has been studied in the context of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions by Lang & Rollinger (2010), according to whom it designates the end of the horizon, symbolizing the Assyrian king’s global dominion. The relevant texts with regard to the tradition of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions are: Ez. 3:7,²³⁵³ 26:3,²³⁵⁴ 26:5,²³⁵⁵ 26:16–18,²³⁵⁶ 27:3,²³⁵⁷ 27:9,²³⁵⁸ 27:29,²³⁵⁹ 27:32,²³⁶⁰ 47:8,²³⁶¹ 47:10,²³⁶² 47:15,²³⁶³ 47:17–20,²³⁶⁴

²³⁵² For classic form-critical studies on Ezekiel, see Zimmerli 1969; Hossfeld 1977.

²³⁵³ “Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and to the Tyrians, to bring cedar wood from Lebanon to the *sea at Joppa*, according to the permission they had from Cyrus king of Persia”.

²³⁵⁴ “Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as *the sea brings up its waves*”.

²³⁵⁵ “‘She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the *midst of the sea*, for I have spoken,’ declares the Lord God, ‘and she will become spoil for the nations’”.

²³⁵⁶ “Then all the *princes of the sea* will go down from their thrones, remove their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble every moment, and be appalled at you. And they will take up a lamentation over you and say to you, ‘How you have perished, O inhabited one, *from the seas*, O renowned city, Which was *mighty on the sea*, She and her inhabitants, who imposed her terror on all her inhabitants! Now the coastlands will tremble on the day of your fall; yes, the coastlands which are *by the sea* will be terrified at your passing”.

²³⁵⁷ “And say to Tyre, who dwells at the *entrance to the sea*, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “O Tyre, you have said, ‘I am perfect in beauty”’.

²³⁵⁸ “The elders of Gebal and her wise men were with you repairing your seams; all the *ships of the sea* and their sailors were with you in order to deal in your merchandise”.

²³⁵⁹ “And all who handle the oar, the sailors, and all the *pilots of the sea* will come down from their ships; they will stand on the land”.

²³⁶⁰ “Moreover, in their wailing they will take up a lamentation for you and lament over you: ‘Who is like Tyre, like her who is silent in the *midst of the sea*?’”

²³⁶¹ “Then he said to me, ‘These waters go out toward the Eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go *toward the sea*, being made to flow into the sea, and the *waters of the sea* become fresh”.

²³⁶² “And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like *the fish of the Great Sea*, very many”.

²³⁶³ “And this shall be the boundary of the land: on the north side, *from the Great Sea* by the way of Hethlon, to the entrance of Zedad”.

²³⁶⁴ “And the boundary shall extend *from the sea* to Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, and on the north toward the north is the border of Hamath. This is the north side. And the east side, from between Hauran, Damascus, Gilead, and the land of Israel, shall be *the Jordan*; from the north border to the *Eastern sea* you shall measure. This is the east side. And the south side toward the south shall extend from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the *brook of Egypt*, and to *the Great Sea*. This is the south side toward the south. And the west side shall be *the Great Sea*, from the south border to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This is the west

48:28,²³⁶⁵ Est. 10:1,²³⁶⁶ Jo. 2:20,²³⁶⁷ Mic. 7:12,²³⁶⁸ 7:19,²³⁶⁹ Zech. 9:4,²³⁷⁰ 9:10,²³⁷¹ 14:8–9a (in which it is explicitly associated with Yahweh’s universal kingship),²³⁷² Am. 8:12,²³⁷³ Josh. 12:3,²³⁷⁴ 15:5,²³⁷⁵ 16:8,²³⁷⁶ Jer. 25:22,²³⁷⁷ Is. 23:2.²³⁷⁸ Is. 24:15.²³⁷⁹

Is. 23:4 contains a clear anthropomorphism of the sea: “Be ashamed, O Sidon; for *the sea speaks*, the stronghold of the sea, saying, ‘I have neither travailed nor given birth, I have neither brought up young men nor reared virgins’”. This could be due to the prominence of the god in the coastal areas. The dialogue given to the sea is curious, as it seems to paint the sea in a feminine light, even though it is presented in negatives to the labours of women. According to Edelman, the wording of the passages of Is. 37:24–25 and 2 Kgs 19:23–24 echoes “typical Assyrian royal bravado” found in Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions and annals. She suggested that that the boast makes more sense in connection to Esarhaddon than the traditional interpretation of Sennacherib.²³⁸⁰ While it is likely that Esarhaddon’s inscriptions were the cause for the utilization of the Mesopotamian royal bravado in Biblical language, as Esarhaddon’s

side”.

²³⁶⁵ “And beside the border of Gad, at the south side toward the south, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to *the brook of Egypt, to the Great Sea*”.

²³⁶⁶ “Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the *coastlands of the sea*”.

²³⁶⁷ “But I will remove the Northern army far from you, and I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, and its vanguard into the *Eastern sea*, and its rear guard into the *Western sea*. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, for it has done great things”.

²³⁶⁸ “It will be a day when they will come to you From Assyria and the cities of Egypt, from Egypt even to the *Euphrates*, even *from sea to sea* and mountain to mountain”.

²³⁶⁹ “He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, you will cast all their sins *into the depths of the sea*”.

²³⁷⁰ “Behold, the Lord will dispossess her and cast her wealth *into the sea*; and she will be consumed with fire”.

²³⁷¹ “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and his dominion will be *from sea to sea*, and *from the River* to the ends of the earth”.

²³⁷² “And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the *Eastern sea* and the other half toward the *Western sea*; it will be in summer as well as in winter. And Yahweh will be king over all the earth”.

²³⁷³ “And people will stagger *from sea to sea*, and from the north even to the east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of Yahweh, but they will not find it”.

²³⁷⁴ “He also ruled over the Eastern Arabah from the *Sea of Kinnereth* to the *Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea)*”.

²³⁷⁵ “The Eastern boundary is *the Salt Sea* as far as the mouth of *the Jordan*”.

²³⁷⁶ “From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and *ended at the sea*”.

²³⁷⁷ “And all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are *beyond the sea*”.

²³⁷⁸ “Be silent, you inhabitants of the coastland, you merchants of Sidon; your *messengers crossed the sea--*”.

²³⁷⁹ “Therefore glorify Yahweh in the east, the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel in the *coastlands of the sea*”.

²³⁸⁰ Edelman 2014, 91–93.

inscriptions often recreate Sennacherib's inscriptions word for word, the language itself can scarcely be used to place them.

Lang & Rollinger provided a thorough examination of the tradition in the Book of Ezekiel, examining the phrase "heart of the sea", which appears in Ez. 27:4,25–25 and 28:2,8 in connection with the phrase "midst of the sea" as it appears in Assyrian royal inscriptions. Therefore, I will only comment on their conclusions.²³⁸¹ They argue that in the "Assyrian era", the phrase "midst of the sea", which goes back to the 3rd millennium BCE and originally referred to a distant location, was eventually used to denote Arwad-Yadana and that the meaning shifted to Tyre by the late Neo-Assyrian period, as the borders of the Empire expanded. The phrase is found especially in the royal inscriptions of Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal (but also earlier in Tiglath-Pileser I–II, Adad-Nerari III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib), although it is possibly already mentioned in Naram-Sin's royal inscription.²³⁸²

In the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the princes of Arwad and Tyre (and sometimes Sidon) lived in 'the midst of the sea'.²³⁸³ Tyre was the centre from which the Empire controlled the entire coastal region, and the phrase was used to signify world domination.²³⁸⁴ As a means of delineating the ever-broadening borders of the Empire, it took on a meaning of the outer reaches of the earth, finally enveloping the entire Mediterranean. Lang & Rollinger drew a connection between the phrases "midst of the sea" and "from sea to sea" without presenting anything in particular to recommend it. Nor do they really explain why or how the "Middle and Neo-Assyrian" monuments would have adapted the Sargonic concept beyond a vague reference to the concept functioning as a "mental map".²³⁸⁵

According to them, Ezekiel, writing a generation after the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, operated within this tradition. They pointed out that use of the phrase "heart of the sea" was not merely applying an isolated poetic phrase, but an adoption of an entire world-view of the Assyrian Sargonids. This was the case, even if the author did use them in a new situation: the fall of the city of Tyre. I broadly agree with Lang & Rollinger's conclusions, which is why instead of replicating their study, I refer to their article on the connection of the Neo-

²³⁸¹ Lang & Rollinger 2010, 253–254.

²³⁸² Albeit the phrase is different, using *qab-li* instead of the Sumerogram MURUB₄ of the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions.

²³⁸³ Lang & Rollinger 2010, 238–244.

²³⁸⁴ Lang & Rollinger 2010, 250–252.

²³⁸⁵ Lang & Rollinger 2010, 250–254.

Assyrian royal inscriptions and the Book of Ezekiel. But a few words on the context of the Book are in order.

Wilson suggested that the mention in Ez. 17 of the ‘cedar of Lebanon’ is an oblique reference by the prophet to the political situation of Israel rather than Phoenicia: “the oracle is clearly concerned with Israel”. The same may be true of the earlier references to the cedar of Lebanon in Ezekiel.²³⁸⁶ Ezekiel’s oracles against the king of Tyre (Ez. 28:1–19) may also have adopted the language of royal inscriptions. Pope initially connected Ez. 28 and the Ugaritic texts, claiming that it was the downfall of the former high-god El that was reflected in the oracles.²³⁸⁷ Wilson described the passage as:

riddled with problems that have defied even the best scholarly solutions. In addition to containing obscure words and possible textual corruptions that make even the translation of the Hebrew text difficult and uncertain, the oracles themselves do not seem to be unified in form or content. This apparent lack of unity enormously increases the chapter’s opaqueness and suggests to most modern critics that the oracles in their present form are the product of a long and complex editorial history. For this reason many scholars perform radical surgery on the text in order to recover its original form before they attempt any sort of interpretation.²³⁸⁸

The phrase “the midst of the sea” is repeated several times in Ez. 28:2, it is the “prince of Tyre” that is said to dwell in the midst of the sea.

Similar to the Ugaritic Ashtar, the prince of Tyre is accused of having elevated himself akin to god.²³⁸⁹ Wilson argued that the prince of Tyre is a symbolic figure in the passage and the oracle is directed not only against him, but the people of Tyre. While vv. 1–10 are directed against a prince, vv. 11–19 are directed against the king of Tyre, who may also symbolize the Tyrians.²³⁹⁰ These may be two separate traditions of the same story in the oracles. Wilson brought up an important point on the redactional process of texts: unless one is to believe that the ancient editors were unconcerned about the overall meaning of the text they were editing, it must be assumed that they intended their work either to clarify or modify the text in a comprehensible manner.²³⁹¹ The same must be assumed of all ancient texts, even though their meaning might escape the modern reader.

Wilson posited that examining the oracles against the mythological background of the NWS narratives has been an attempt to demonstrate the literary

²³⁸⁶ Wilson 1987, 217–218.

²³⁸⁷ Pope 1955, 97–103.

²³⁸⁸ Wilson 1987, 211.

²³⁸⁹ Wilson (1987, 211) entertained the possibility that he is accused of claiming to be like “the Canaanite high god El” in vv. 2, 6, and 9.

²³⁹⁰ Wilson 1987, 211–212.

²³⁹¹ Wilson 1987, 212.

cohesion of the passage and to solve the textual problems which purely literary approaches have failed to solve. A number of mythological motifs have been discussed in the context of the passage. With regard to the Combat Myth, it is interesting that a “Mesopotamian or Canaanite myth describing a primal royal figure” seated on the cosmic mountain has been seen as the backdrop of the Ez. passage. This self-same myth would also seem to feature in the texts of Gen. 2–3 and Is. 14:12–20, but Wilson pointed out that the latter do not contain a fully developed myth unlike the Ez. passage.²³⁹² The weakness of Wilson’s examination of the Ez. passage is in his use of Pope’s partly reconstructed and partly imagined El-mythology (Pope sought to recreate El-myths from the materials embedded in the Ugaritic texts).²³⁹³ He failed to engage with the fact that Albright had already denounced many of Pope’s propositions a year after their publication, and with good cause.²³⁹⁴

For all the pioneering work of Pope, his interpretation of the Baal Cycle is poorly supported by the text.²³⁹⁵ There are examples of deposed gods in the Baal Cycle, but El is not among them. Pope may have been correct about the mythological background of the Ez. passage, but this mythological background is not a hypothetical El-myth, and not necessarily an Ugaritic myth at all. Likely it is a form of the Combat Myth, either a local myth applied to a historical situation regarding Tyre or an adaptation of a Tyrian myth. Nissinen recognized the influence of the Combat Myth on prophetic literature in the Ez. 27–28 oracles against Tyre and further in Hab 3:8.²³⁹⁶

According to Edelman, it is the description of Thebes in Nah 3:8 that parallels the description of Tyre in Ez 27–28. In the texts, both cities were located amidst water, using water as a protective wall, which is factually incorrect regarding Thebes. According to Edelman, the author of Nahum used “stereotypical language to describe an imagined far-away, famous site associated with a perennial river or the Mediterranean” and that he was “intending to create a deliberate link in the mind of the listener between Tyre and Thebes, to forge an

²³⁹² Wilson (1987, 212–213) did not mention any specific texts, but as he references Widengren 1956, 1958; Gunkel 1921 [1895] (and others), the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and the Babylonian *EE* must be among the myths alluding to the primal royal figure.

²³⁹³ Pope 1955, 82–94.

²³⁹⁴ Albright 1956.

²³⁹⁵ Wilson (1987, 213–214) claimed that “Pope’s interpretation has the virtue of being based on an actual myth, or at least on a myth that can plausibly be gleaned from the Ugaritic texts”, which is not strictly speaking true.

²³⁹⁶ Nissinen 2014, 42.

associative links in the shared social memory to reinforce common evocative images and values”.²³⁹⁷ Geography aside, if one looks in the textual record for the “prince who dwells in his island fortress in the heart of the seas and who claims to be a god” only to be deposed,²³⁹⁸ then surely Yamm would be the likelier candidate. If, however, one looks for a god who is pre-eminent, falls from power, and is exiled to the underworld,²³⁹⁹ then Baal himself (who was the Melqart of Tyre) fits the picture.

But regardless of what version(s) of the myth was used in the construction of the text, the passage also seems to borrow the vocabulary of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, not only in the mention of the ‘heart of the seas’ in vv. 2 and 8, but also in the list of treasures in vv. 4 and 13. The context in which it is used is a different question, however, and Wilson may be correct in positing that the Israelite high priest being deposed and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple were the driving force for the extant text. He made an interesting observation that this is the only place in the HB where the title prince, used in early Israelite traditions (2 Sam. 6:21, 7:8, 1 Kgs. 1:35, 14:7, 16:2) to refer to rulers directly designated by Yahweh, is applied to a foreign ruler.²⁴⁰⁰ In a similar vein as the Exodus-story (written about the Babylonian Exile) being transposed to Egypt for political reasons, the oracles against the king of Tyre in the passage were actually about the high priest of Jerusalem, delivered originally to an audience of bureaucrats and priests – the upper-class elite of Jerusalem.²⁴⁰¹

There are also eight coincidences of the words ‘sea’ and ‘river’ in the Psalter, which may likewise owe influence to the inscriptions: (24:2, 46:3–5, 66:6, 72:8, 80:11, 89:26, 93:2–4 and 98: 6–8). I have discussed most of the psalms in other contexts, so only a few further things will be pointed out about them. While in the Ugaritic texts Yamm and Nahar are both in the singular masculine form, in the Hebrew texts the sea remains in the singular, while the river is often featured in the plural feminine form נְהַרֹּת. The form נְהַרִּים, which appears as a masculine

²³⁹⁷ Edelman 2014, 100.

²³⁹⁸ Wilson 1987, 214.

²³⁹⁹ Wilson 1987, 214.

²⁴⁰⁰ Wilson 1987, 216–217: “Elsewhere, it is applied to native Israelites, and, as noted above, in monarchical contexts the title indicates that the ruler is divinely appointed”.

²⁴⁰¹ Wilson (1987, 217) suggested that it was written while they were in captivity, during the first deportation. “[...]the prophet seems to have delighted in clothing his divine message in concrete but obscure images which even his original audience could not always understand”. He also posited on p. 218 that the politically concealed oracle about Jerusalem (vv. 11–19) may have been attached to an actual anti-Tyrian oracle (vv. 1–10) by later redactors, no longer comprehending the double meaning of the original oracle, instead interpreting it literally.

plural, is also found in the HB (e.g. Hab. 3:8), although the possibility of this form retaining an archaic dual form akin to the Ugaritic *nhrm* (naharēmi) remains.²⁴⁰² In the Ugaritic, the river takes on a masculine plural.

Ps. 46:3–5 not only features the parallelism of sea and river, but also the phrase “heart of the seas”:

על-כן לא-נִירָא בְּהִמִּיר אֶרֶץ וּבְמוֹט הָרִים בְּלֵב יָמִים	46:3–5	Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, and though the mountains be moved into <i>the heart of the seas</i> ;
הַמִּזְחֵק מִיָּמִין יִרְעֹשׁ הָרִים בְּגִלְגֻּלָּתוֹ		Though the waters thereof roar and foam, though the mountains shake ²⁴⁰³ at the swelling thereof.
נָהָר פְּלִגְיוֹ יִשְׂמְחוּ עִיר-אֱלֹהִים קֹדֶשׁ מִשְׁכְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן		(There is) <i>a river</i> , the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holiest dwelling-place of Elyon.

Craigie (1983a) saw in Ps. 46 traces of a mythic tradition, which had been transformed for the use of Hebrew religion. The ancient Israelite traditions would have been reformed for the use of the Jerusalem cult. But according to Craigie, the psalm may contain materials which are even older, like the tradition of the river at the foot of the throne of El (cf. KTU 1.17 VI 47).

Craigie connected the river specifically to the throne of El, denying that the motif had any connection to the pre-Hebrew cult at Jerusalem. He linked the origin of the image of the river to the language of Canaanite mythology, in which a connection between the throne of El and the ancient cult of El Elyon is found. According to Craigie, the psalm had a probable connection with the foundation of the Davidic cult in Jerusalem, whereby the ancient Hebrew traditions and the local traditions of Jerusalem were associated and mixed.²⁴⁰⁴ As there was no river physically running through the city of Jerusalem, nor was one found in its immediate vicinity in the desert, it has been suggested that the idea of the river may be a borrowed concept in the connection of the royal cult, a symbolic image born from the influence of other cultures, akin to the rivers of Paradise (Gen. 2:10–14).²⁴⁰⁵

While strictly speaking the construction בְּלֵב יָמִים is an anthropomorphism, the ‘heart’ is here in prepositional use, not unlike the Akkadian *libbu/ina libbi*.

²⁴⁰² Craigie (1983a, 212) saw the pluralization of the river as an attempt to depersonify Canaanite divinities.

²⁴⁰³ See the speech of Adad-Nirari II upon his victory: “He had himself exalted with elaborate praise: in all lands kings are in sore distress and the mountains shake!” (A.0.99.2:76).

²⁴⁰⁴ Craigie 1983a, 343–344. Contra Kloos 1986, 123.

²⁴⁰⁵ Thus Weiser 1962, 370.

The construction itself is a common ancient Semitic prepositional phrase, and on its own it cannot be used to demonstrate textual borrowings. The phrase ‘in the heart of the seas’ (*i-na ŠĀ^{bi}* A.AB.BA) is already found in the El Amarna texts, (EA 114:19, 288:33). What is significant is the centrality of the image of the throne situated at the very centre of the sea.²⁴⁰⁶ A further hint at the possible influence of Mesopotamian royal inscriptions on the tradition of the psalm can be found in the description of the storm-god Adad in the statue of Shalmaneser III dedicated to the Adad of Kurbail (A.O.102.12). Adad is described in it as ‘the one whose shout makes the mountains shake and the seas churn’ (*šá ina KA-šu ħur-šá-a-ni i-nu-šú i-sa-bu-’a ta-ma-a-te*).²⁴⁰⁷

The ‘heart of the seas’ mentioned in Ps. 46 is also a phrase that we find, for example, in Esarhaddon’s royal inscription. While it is but one in a long line of royal inscriptions employing traditional vocabulary, the Esarhaddon inscription specifically may be the immediate source for the Biblical use of the inscriptional phrases and vocabulary.²⁴⁰⁸ This is suggested by the use of the proper name Tarshish (^{KUR}*tar-si-si*, in Esarhaddon 060, o 10’/RINAP 4),²⁴⁰⁹ which apparently refers to a geographic location – although its actual location is a matter of some debate.²⁴¹⁰ While similar place-names have been found in other inscriptions, the spelling of Esarhaddon’s Tarsisi is a *hapax* form, and outside of the Biblical texts, the Esarhaddon inscription is one of a very few mentions of this name.

In Esarhaddon’s inscription, it is the king of Sidon who sits in the heart of the seas, but in Ez. 28:2 it is the king of Tyre. Although admitting that the phrase has mythological connotations, Day has tried to use geography in explaining this expression with regard to Tyre,²⁴¹¹ but if the designation could be attached to more than one centre in the Phoenician heartland, it can scarcely be explained

²⁴⁰⁶ Dahood (1961, 270–271) discussed the possibility of 𐤇𐤍𐤏 containing a locative 𐤇-, indicating direction, as the phrase ‘centre of the seas’ makes little logical sense in the plural. His other suggestions included an enclitic 𐤇- or the 𐤇 of *pluralis majestatis*. This was indicated by the verbal suffixes, in which he saw an underlying singular. He suggested that Ps. 24:2 might contain a similar form. However, the plurality of the sea seems no different from the plurality of the heavens, and indeed the two were, in a fashion, considered counterparts.

²⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, Adad is described as he “who controls all the winds, who provides abundant water, who brings down rain, who makes lightning flash, who creates vegetation”.

²⁴⁰⁸ Note also the suggestion that Ps. 72, which also mentions Tarshish, is based on Aššurbanibal’s enthronement hymn. Miller II 2013, 214.

²⁴⁰⁹ *áš-pur* MAN.MEŠ *šá* MURUB₄ *tam-tim* DÜ-šú-nu TA ^{KUR}*ia-da-na-na* ^{KUR}*ia-man a-di* ^{KUR}*tar-si-si* / I wrote to all of the kings who are in the midst of the sea, from Iadnana and Ionia to Tarsisi; they bowed down at my feet.

²⁴¹⁰ See López-Ruiz 2009 for discussion.

²⁴¹¹ Day 2000, 27. Tyre used to be an island before Alexander the Great connected it to the mainland via an isthmus.

away as mere poetic geography.²⁴¹²

Another phrase that is found in several Mesopotamian royal inscriptions is the dominance from the Upper sea to the Lower sea, which may be the inspiration behind Ps. 72: (featured also in Zech. 9:10, Ex. 23:31, Josh. 1:4, Dt. 11:14; Ez. 28:2). According to Loretz, this is the standard expression of royal power.²⁴¹³

וַיְרַד מִן הַיָּם עַד-יָם	72:8	May he have dominion also from sea to sea,
וַיִּמְנָהר עַד-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ		and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Ps. 72 owes much of its terminology to the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions discussed in the previous chapters.

In the passage, Yahweh is supplicated to extend the dominion of the king from “sea to sea” and from “the river until the ends of the earth” in parallel to Zech. 9:10, where the context is the coming the messianic king: “his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth”. The only difference is in the verb. Ps. 72 uses the verb רדה while Zech. 9 has לשם. With slight alteration, the phrase can also be found in Ex. 23:31 (“from the Red Sea unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness unto the River”), Dt. 11:24 (“from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border”), and Josh. 1:4 (“unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border”). But in addition to the imagery of the royal inscriptions, Ps. 72 also has vocabulary familiar from the Ugaritic texts.

Vv. 2 and 4 discuss the duties of the king as the judge of the poor and crusher of the oppressor; this is reminiscent of the duties of the king in the Keret narrative (KTU 1.16 VI 43–50), while Loretz connected it to an Ugaritic Akkadian text RS 79.025A+B/C3.²⁴¹⁴ Cedars are mentioned in 72:15, which Segert connected with Ps. 19.²⁴¹⁵ Verse 6 describes Yahweh as a weather-god, and according to Ringgren, v. 8 is where the cosmic ocean and king’s global dominion are associated.²⁴¹⁶ The phrase “from sea to sea” cannot be found in the Ugaritic corpus, albeit the text KTU 1.23 features the construction *ym bn ym* several times (l. 58, 61).²⁴¹⁷ While the geography surrounding ancient Ugarit and Jerusalem

²⁴¹² Note also the Sumerian phrase “water of the heart” (A.ŠĀ-ga), which refers to seminal fluid.

²⁴¹³ Loretz 2002, 171.

²⁴¹⁴ Loretz 2002, 174. Akkadian texts from Ugarit have been published in PRU IV.

²⁴¹⁵ Segert 1999, 175.

²⁴¹⁶ Ringgren 1990, 92.

²⁴¹⁷ See section 5.2. The construction is probably to be translated as ‘sea from sea’. Ugaritic language features a preposition ‘d, but in the Ugaritic language it has only a temporal meaning.

differs, the evidence of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions suggests that the phrase “from sea to sea” is ideological at least as much as it is geographic. Nonetheless, the absence of the phrase from the Ugaritic texts may be due simply to the fact that Ugarit was located on the coast. The psalm has been seen as combining Assyrian traditions with NWS symbolic language,²⁴¹⁸ an assessment which is made quite clear by the choice of the terminology. Ps. 72 has been described as an anthology, facilitating the possibility that it has retained material from multiple sources.²⁴¹⁹

Influences of the Combat Myth have also traditionally been found in connection with the Book of Daniel, and the discovery of the Ugaritic texts has furthered discussion on the topic with regard to the book. While Daniel is one of the youngest books in the HB, it seems to contain motifs and vocabulary familiar from the Ugaritic texts.²⁴²⁰ There can be no direct textual link between them, and Babylo-Persian influence is much more likely, considering the age of the book. The influence need not be from *EE*, although as a major narrative of combat in the period, it has undoubtedly influenced texts to a varying degree. Some of this influence may be ideological. Dan. 11:45 reads: “He will pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the holy mountain”. This seems to hark back to cosmic geography, where the sea and the mountain are the two extremes that form the Universe. The same cosmic geography is found in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, where the description of the borders of the world was meant to imply total, universal domination.

The many details shared between the Biblical texts and the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions deserve a detailed study of their own, and I have selected details pertaining to the Combat Myth alone in order to demonstrate an alternative development in the mythic tradition via the medium of royal inscriptions. As to whether all of these concepts featuring the sea actually refer or allude to one and the same tradition, the link between them is admittedly difficult to prove, although it must be noted that both the concept of the washing of the weapon and ruling from Upper sea to Lower sea, appear likewise in the oldest Sargonic inscriptions and the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, even if the mention of the washing of the

It is possible that the preposition *bn* might have had an overlapping semantic field to the Hebrew *בן*, insofar as its spatial and comparative aspects are concerned.

²⁴¹⁸ Loretz 2002 196–197.

²⁴¹⁹ Loretz 2002, 206–207.

²⁴²⁰ The Book of Daniel and the Ugaritic texts have been examined, e.g. by Bentzen 1955; Emerton 1958; Collins 1977; 1984.

weapons ends with Shalmaneser. There seems to be no other ideological background that would explain the continued use of the terminology in royal inscriptions, so the motif of the Storm-God's battle with the sea on behalf of the king is *explanatory*.

In this dissertation, I have attempted to examine *why* changes would have taken place within the tradition. Conservative though traditions are, they are not static. Nevertheless, it is true that no link can be established between the concepts that to be proven beyond doubt. In the last chapter, before drawing conclusions based on the texts discussed in this study, I examine some of the differences between the Mesopotamian traditions and the Egyptian witnesses to the Combat Myth.

6.5 The North West Semitic Combat Myth in Egyptian Sources²⁴²¹

Versions or traditions of the Combat Myth are also known from ancient Egyptian sources, and they have often been connected to or compared with the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. As such, they have had some limited influence on the interpretation of the traditions of the Combat Myth in the Biblical texts, but as I am about to demonstrate, the Egyptian traditions are quite different from the mythic traditions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and they may serve as a contrast to the previously discussed traditions. While Wyatt has stated that no specific *Chaoskampf* myth existed in Egypt,²⁴²² Malamat went so far as to claim that together with the HB, the Egyptian sources display the closest affinity to the texts from Ugarit.²⁴²³ But it seems that the Egyptian texts also contain not an insignificant amount of NWS influence.

Many of the Egyptian myths describe battles between at least partially anthropomorphic or even fully humanized incarnations of the gods. A famous myth featuring the sun-god Re's battle against the serpent Apep also has somewhat of a maritime connection, a feature of the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamian myths. According to Wyatt, the myth of Re and Apep offers the

²⁴²¹ This chapter is an expanded version of the presentation "The West Semitic Conflict Myth and Egyptian Sources from the Middle and New Kingdoms" given at the Annual Midwest Regional Meeting of the American Oriental Society on February 11th 2011. Portions of this chapter have been published in Töyräänvuori 2013.

²⁴²² Wyatt 2005, 163.

²⁴²³ Malamat 1998, 29.

nearest parallel to the Combat Myth in Egyptian sources, at least in conceptual terms.²⁴²⁴ It must be noted, however, that in Egyptian mythology it is the sun-god who plays the part of the warrior, not a storm or a weather-god like in the NWS traditions.²⁴²⁵ But there are some similarities between the Egyptian and the Levantine traditions as well.

NWS influence flowed into Egyptian culture following the period of the rule of the Asiatic Hyksos in the 15th dynasty.²⁴²⁶ Contact between Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean had naturally existed prior to this, and there had been a sizeable Asiatic population in Egypt during the 12th and 13th Dynasties. But the relations between Egypt and the Levantine cities outside of Byblos had not been particularly warm.²⁴²⁷ A second period of close contact between Egypt and the Levant followed during the time of the New Kingdom with the spreading of the Egyptian Empire into Asia, a period which lasted from the time of King Ahmose of the 18th dynasty to the middle of the 20th dynasty (c. 1550–1120 BCE).²⁴²⁸ A garrison was assigned to Ugarit in the 15th century BCE during the reign of Amenophis II or Thutmose III.²⁴²⁹ During this time of close contact, several NWS divinities, such as Anat, Ashtart, and Resheph, were adopted into the Egyptian pantheon,²⁴³⁰ and other Semitic divinities were given Egyptian equivalents. For example, the storm-god Baal was called Seth in Egyptian texts.²⁴³¹ While these Semitic deities were given Egyptianizing iconographies (*interpretatio aegyptiaca*), their characteristics and natures stayed more or less intact.²⁴³²

As regards the names of the Biblical monsters Leviathan and Behemoth discussed previously, P.Sallier I contains the New Kingdom story of the attempt of the Seth-worshipping Prince Apophis – interpreted as the Hyksos ruler Apepi (‘3-

²⁴²⁴ In political terms, he saw the myth of Horus and Seth as the nearest parallel. Wyatt 2005, 163.

²⁴²⁵ Redford 1992, 46. It must be pointed out that the sun-god also played the part of the divine warrior in some Sumerian and Sumero-Babylonian myths.

²⁴²⁶ The Hyksos were “speakers of the West Semitic tongue”. Redford 1992, 100.

²⁴²⁷ Redford 1992, 81, 101–102. An “urban but thoroughly Middle Bronze Canaanite” population existed especially at the major sites of Tell el-Dab’a, Tell el-Yehudiyeh and Tell el-Maskhuta.

²⁴²⁸ Redford 1992, 140. See pp. 148–160 for the creation of the Egyptian Empire. Albright 1928 was one of the first major contributions on the Egyptian empire in Asia and the archaeological and onomastic evidence thereof.

²⁴²⁹ Redford 1992, 160.

²⁴³⁰ Budin 2004, 100. Redford 1992, 43, writes that while “an occasional Asiatic deity may turn up in the Egyptian pantheon, consciously “borrowed” and partly “Egyptianized” like Hathor of Byblos, for the most part the cults, pantheons, and mythologies of Egypt and Western Asia remained distinct in outward expression”. He held that the mythologies sprang out of specific landscapes and climates, with the cults arising from markedly different societies.

²⁴³¹ Faulkner, Wente & Simpson 1973, 77.

²⁴³² Budin 2004, 100.

wsr-r’) – who also had the epithet ‘Beloved of Sobek’ (*sbk nb*),²⁴³³ being the deity of the Nile crocodile, insulting the pharaoh Sekenenre (probably Sekenenre Taa II) and demanding that he withdraw from the canal the hippopotamuses which disturb his sleep; this, in spite of the considerable geographic distance between their two domains, Avaris and Thebes. This was to be the prelude to war between them. Apepi is described as the worshiper of Seth(-Baal) in the papyrus itself, and it is also evident in the spelling of the Pharaoh’s cartouche. The story appears to have been written down much later than the historical events it purports to portray, indicating that the symbolism at play had longevity.²⁴³⁴

According to Wente, Seth was symbolized by the hippopotamus, which would make both the hippopotamus and the crocodile symbolic of the foreign, Asiatic ruler of Egypt.²⁴³⁵ If both the hippopotamus and the crocodile can be shown as having symbolized foreign monarchs, then the adoption of the symbolism by Biblical writers is hardly surprising – even if there is a hint of irony in using such xenophobic Egyptian symbolism to refer back to Egypt and possibly to Egyptian rulers. But if the Biblical authors meant to use the terms to refer to Babylonian rulers, the use of symbolism of known hostile connotations toward Asiatic rulers is more comprehensible. However, in this thesis I have submitted alternative ways for interpreting the names of the Biblical monsters, namely by attaching them to different earth formations in the Levantine area.

According to Wyatt, the independence of the Egyptian renderings of the Combat Myth serves to highlight the homogeneity, coherence, and continuity of the traditions in the “western Asiatic world”,²⁴³⁶ but the degree to which the Egyptian traditions owed to a truly independent genesis is open for question. On the contrary, it is more than possible that the Egyptian stories borrowed from the “western Asiatic” narratives. Among these Asiatic narratives and texts may have been the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions discussed in the previous chapter, as the stele inscription of the 18th dynasty pharaoh Thutmose III (c. 1501–1447 BCE) found in the Gebel Barkal sanctuaries in Nubia contains phrases and vocabulary familiar from them.²⁴³⁷

²⁴³³ See James 1961, 40.

²⁴³⁴ De Moor (1990, 73) also named P.Sallier I as one of the sources evidencing the conflation of Seth and Baal in New Kingdom texts.

²⁴³⁵ Wente 1973, 77.

²⁴³⁶ Wyatt 2005, 164.

²⁴³⁷ Yeivin 1934, 194–195. This is not a standard Egyptian royal inscription, but “contains several points of interest for the historian of the ANE” and portions which are of “direct interest to

Featured among the pharaoh's deeds was the conquest of the cities and lands of the *Nhrn*,²⁴³⁸ the crossing over of the sea, the construction of boats from “the cedar of the mountains of God's land” or Lebanon, the crossing of the great stream, “the midst of the Great sea”, etc.²⁴³⁹ The adoption of vocabulary familiar from Mesopotamian inscriptions is natural in the context of the format of inscription, the content of which appears to be the conquest of Byblos and other areas in the Eastern Mediterranean.²⁴⁴⁰ This feat was performed by many of the Neo-Assyrian kings discussed previously.

The Egyptian narrative story most often connected with the Combat Myth is that of the sun-god Re's journey to the underworld, where he battled daily the monstrous serpent Apep (‘3pp).²⁴⁴¹ Apep (or Apophis, as the creature is known in Greek sources) was depicted as a giant serpent; for example, the Middle Kingdom text on *Not Dying Because of a Snake* describes Re's enemy as a 50-foot or 30-cubit-long serpent²⁴⁴² – albeit the name Apep is not mentioned in this particular text, where the actual name of the serpent is “He-on-the-mountain-that-he-must-overthrow”. Morenz described Apep as an impressive supernatural figure, an enemy of order and an “anti-god”. Apep is not known in Old Kingdom sources, but seems to have made its appearance during the 9th dynasty of the First Intermediate Period (c. 20th c. BCE). The first known mention of Apep is from the tomb inscription of the nomarch Ankhtifi of Mo'alla, which pessimistically describes the world as *tz pn n '3pp*, “this sandbank of Apep” (Mo'alla 4:10).²⁴⁴³ The phrase may have invoked Apep as the world-encircling sea or river.

The figure of Apep features more frequently in the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom, where it is described as a water-dwelling enemy of the sun-god

Palestinian archaeology”.

²⁴³⁸ Yeivin (1934, 195) associated this with the Biblical אָרֶם נַהָרִים. The pharaoh “put them to the sword”.

²⁴³⁹ This is very similar to Shalmaneser's description of the conquest of Zamua: “The remnant of their army boarded boats of papyrus and escaped by sea; I boarded boats of inflated skins; I pursued them; I defeated them in the midst of the sea; I plundered them” (A.O.102.6 ii 12–15).

²⁴⁴⁰ Yeivin (1934, 200) also pointed out that words “borrowed from the Canaanite abound” in the inscriptions of Thutmose III. Among them, in the context of royal inscriptions and NWS kingship, the use of the word *dd.t* derived from the Semitic *dwd* is of interest. See K. H. Sethe, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums* IV, pp. 631, 666. [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932–1933].

²⁴⁴¹ John A. Wilson, “The Repulsing of the Dragon and the Creation” in *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. James B. Pritchard; 3rd edition; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 6–7. For a newer translation see Erik Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings: Horizon of Eternity* (New York: Timken, 1990), 103–113. First published by E. A. Wallis Budge in *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, First Series* (London: British Museum, 1910).

²⁴⁴² The concept may be compared with the texts from Eshnunna discussed previously.

²⁴⁴³ Morenz 2004, 201.

whose solar barque he attacks.²⁴⁴⁴ The narrative was also popular during the New Kingdom, from the 18th to 21st dynasties, and it is featured in the tombs of the Valley of Kings; in many of them the giant serpent physically encircles the entire burial chamber, thus making Apep one of the main features of Re's journey to the underworld. The confrontation between Re and Apep is depicted as part of the *Amduat*, a funerary text painted on the inside walls of burial chambers, taking place upon its 7th hour. But at least in some iterations of the myth, it is actually the god Seth standing on Re's solar bark that confronts Apep with a curse, as Seth was the only one of the sun-god's entourage that Apep did not manage to hypnotize.²⁴⁴⁵ Apep is then bound, speared, dismembered with hot knives, roasted and burned, night after night.²⁴⁴⁶

What is curious in the context of the present study with regard to the story of Apep and Re comes from the field of iconography; the Theban tomb of an official by the name of Iner-Kha presents a fairly well-known image of Re in the form of a white cat (which, adorned with the Amun crown, bears a striking resemblance to a hare) impaling the serpent Apep.²⁴⁴⁷ This scene is also featured in the P.Hunefer rendition of the Book of the Dead, dating to the 19th dynasty. What is relevant about the scene in connection with the tradition of the weapons of the Storm-God discussed in previous chapters is that the weapon employed by Re in this particular scene is a leafy tree. This similarity in motif does not require a direct dependence between the iconographic representations of Egypt and Syria, but it is a well-known fact that influence in the fields of religious conception and art travelled freely between the areas of Egypt and the Levant in the Bronze Age.

There is evidence of contact between Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean during the MBA. The Mari text A.1270 evidences a trade relationship between the city of Mari and Crete, from which goods were also exported to Egypt.²⁴⁴⁸ The wealth of Egyptian iconography may also help elucidate some Levantine conceptions of mythological themes. Egyptian religious conceptions were heavily influenced by Eastern Mediterranean or NWS ideas in the LBA. Many NWS gods familiar from the Ugaritic pantheon were adopted into Egyptian religion; some were associated with native Egyptian gods (e.g. Baal with Seth), while others

²⁴⁴⁴ Morenz 2004, 203. The barks were actually two: *matet* or "strengthening" for the morning and *semket* or "weakening" for the evening.

²⁴⁴⁵ Redford 1992, 47.

²⁴⁴⁶ Armour 2001, 61.

²⁴⁴⁷ Pritchard 1954, 218 (fig. 669).

²⁴⁴⁸ Malamat 1998, 36.

were worshipped by their Semitic names, like Anat and Qudshu.²⁴⁴⁹ The so-called Winchester relief portraying a goddess bearing the names Qudshu-Astarte-Anat has been dated to the time of the 19th or 20th dynasty, possibly the reign of Ramesses III, and roughly the same period as the Astarte-Papyrus,²⁴⁵⁰ discussed shortly.

Apep was not only depicted as a serpent in the iconography of the Amduat, but its name was also written with the determinative for a snake, although from the Coffin Texts onwards the determinative was apparently mutilated (according to Morenz for euphemistic reasons). In CT V 224a, we also find a form of the name in which the epithet has both the determinative for a snake and a determinative for a person, which may indicate that Apep was conceived of at least partially anthropomorphically. An alternative image of Apep depicted the creature as a turtle, albeit this was far less common than its depiction as a snake. In Egyptian sources, Apep was never given the designation *ntr*, ‘god’. Apep also never received its own cult, nor was it depicted in statues. These are idiosyncrasies which have also often been suggested for the Ugaritic Yamm, but it is rather unclear whether or not Yamm was actually featured as a recipient of offerings in the cult of Ugarit or whether he was considered divine.²⁴⁵¹ Because natural order, the order of the world, was a major concern for the ancient Egyptians, it may indeed be justified to describe Apep as an agent of Chaos, a role that has often also been – perhaps unfairly – thrust upon the Ugaritic Yamm, possibly in part due to the association of the two in research literature.

Morenz suggested that Apep may originally have been a figure of popular religion, and therefore absent from the “elite” sources which survived from the Old Kingdom.²⁴⁵² During the period of the New Kingdom Apep was featured in Underworld books, or the so-called *Apophisbücher*, featuring magical spells against the serpent.²⁴⁵³ There is also a text called “The names of Apep which shall not be” (P.Bremner-Rhind 32,13–32,42), including a litany of negative epithets of

²⁴⁴⁹ NWS influence can be seen, for example, in the naming by Ramesses II of one of his daughters Bint-Anat, “Daughter-of-Anat” and his weapon “Anat-is-victorious”. Names bearing the theophoric element Anat started appearing in Egyptian scarab inscriptions during the 15th dynasty, some centuries after the first attestations of Anat as a theophoric element in the OB period in Mari and Babylon. Redford 1992, 110; Green 2003, 201–202.

²⁴⁵⁰ Edwards 1955, 51.

²⁴⁵¹ And likewise at Emar. See Arnaud 1986. The sea was certainly the recipient of sacrifices, but not necessarily Yamm, the opponent of the Storm-God.

²⁴⁵² Morenz 2004, 202. There may even exist a connection between the name of the monster Apep and the Hyksos pharaoh Apepi.

²⁴⁵³ Morenz 2004, 203.

Apep.²⁴⁵⁴ The same papyrus, dating to the Ptolemaic period but containing much older material, features the “The Beginning of the Book of Overthrowing Apophis, the Enemy of Re and the Enemy of the King” (25,21–28,18); this text also is known in the literature by the name of “The Repulsing of the Dragon”.²⁴⁵⁵ It is first-person monologue by Re on the events featured in the Amduat. The Apophis described in these texts is extremely animal-like, having next to no anthropomorphic characteristics. Since the creature is also vanquished daily, almost as a matter of course, (“I have consumed his bones, I have annihilated his soul during every day, I have cut up the vertebrae of his back...”), he does not even seem to present a real threat to the sun-god. It is only when this natural order of things, his daily vanquishing, was disrupted that the figure of Apep became horrific.

A connection between creation and the subduing of a water monster (*snk n mw*, ‘the greed²⁴⁵⁶ of the waters’ or ‘submerger of the waters’) has also been proposed in the Middle Egyptian text, *Teaching for King Merykara*.²⁴⁵⁷ According to Redford, the hero-monster motif is concealed in the substratum of mythological thought underlying more popular myths.²⁴⁵⁸ The text is a didactic text, not a myth. If indeed a subduing of a water monster was meant by the term, then it would indicate that this sort of mythological thinking was not unfamiliar to the ancient Egyptian. But one can hardly assume that this singular mention would have been influenced by NWS conceptions, as during the purported time of the writing of the text there were few connections between Egypt and the Levant.²⁴⁵⁹

Redford is correct in pointing out that ancient Egyptian creation accounts did not commonly make use of the creation battle motif. Frankfort writes that the Egyptian doctrines were “rooted in a single basic conviction, to wit that the

²⁴⁵⁴ Morenz 2004, 205.

²⁴⁵⁵ Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca III; Bruxelles: Édition de la Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1933).

²⁴⁵⁶ The noun and the verb are written with the same signs, so a participial form of some kind may be correct.

²⁴⁵⁷ Botterwerk & Ringgren 1990, 88; Kloos 1986, 71. She prefers ‘the avarice of the waters’.

²⁴⁵⁸ Redford 1992, 46. Redford dated the text to the 21st century BCE, apparently regarding it as contemporary to King Merykara’s reign (and on pp. 67–68 suggests that it would have actually been authored by Merykara’s father King Akhtoy III), with King Merykara being regarded as the last ruler of the somewhat obscure 10th dynasty. The dating seems early based on the fact that the language of the text is Middle Egyptian, and this would make the text one of the first ever to be written in Middle Egyptian. The principal sources for the text date from the 18th dynasty in the New Kingdom, being the papyri Hermitage and Carlsberg. Translation and transliteration of the text in S. Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 B.C.: Questions and Readings* (London: Golden House, 2004), 112–120.

²⁴⁵⁹ Redford 1992, 69.

universe is essentially static. The Egyptian held that he lived in a changeless world [...] The peculiar character of Egyptian religion appeared to derive precisely from an implicit assumption that only the changeless is ultimately significant". The ancient NWS conception of the world, on the other hand, seems extremely dynamic, although one must be careful with enforcing such dichotomies on ancient thought.²⁴⁶⁰ Unlike in the Western Asiatic world, however, in Egypt this motif was according to Redford a rationalization of the solar eclipse.²⁴⁶¹ But the connection of the battle motif to the concept of creation in the Ugaritic corpus likewise remains contested, and I have argued against the concept in this thesis.

Another Middle Egyptian story which has sometimes been linked with the Combat Myth, the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor,²⁴⁶² seems upon closer inspection to hold very little relevance to a study of the Combat Myth. Dated to the 11th dynasty or the early Middle Kingdom,²⁴⁶³ the literary text features a sailor, shipwrecked on a magical island ("island of the *k3*"), full of fruit trees and all good things. This island is inhabited by a serpent creature who relays to the sailor the story of how his entire brood was burned and killed by a falling meteorite. The serpent then sends the sailor back home with a ship filled with all the good things of the island; when the sailor promises to report to his king about the magnificence of the island, the serpent tells the sailor that he will not be able to return, as the island will have disappeared.

The story has been interpreted as an instruction or teaching disguised as narrative, expressing the cultural virtues of the time.²⁴⁶⁴ The narrative does not seem to have much bearing on the Combat Myth, as it features no battle and the serpent creature, while frightening, is in no way malevolent. Despite the fact that the serpent Apep in the Re-narrative is an adversary of the sun-god, in ancient Egypt snakes and serpents were not considered evil creatures, but rather symbols of protection.²⁴⁶⁵ This may be seen most readily in the fact that the pharaoh's crown featured a cobra, ready to attack the enemies of the ruler. As the motif of

²⁴⁶⁰ Frankfort 1948, vii–viii.

²⁴⁶¹ Redford 1992, 47.

²⁴⁶² E.g. Lanczkowski 1953, 363–368, who associated the serpent and the sea with the notion of the primal ocean.

²⁴⁶³ Faulkner, Wente & Simpson 1973, 50.

²⁴⁶⁴ Faulkner, Wente & Simpson 1973, 6.

²⁴⁶⁵ Hoffner 1992, 11, agreed that in Egypt reptiles could be symbols of protection, but continues that "clearly in Hittite culture, as in Babylonia and ancient Israel, serpents usually represented evil".

conflict is absent, the serpent is not malevolent, and only tenuous links between the adversary of the NWS Combat Myth and the serpent have been made, it would appear that this narrative has little to offer in the way of understanding the Combat Myth. While the sea in the narrative is called the “Great Green” (*w3d-wr*), a designation usually connected with the Mediterranean, the fact that the serpent calls himself “the lord of Punt” (l. 151) is cause enough to suspect that the island was believed to have been located in the Red Sea.²⁴⁶⁶

The Semitic word *yam*, on the other hand, is used as the name of the sea instead of the “Great Green” in *the Story of Two Brothers*, a New Kingdom text dated to c. 13th c. BCE.²⁴⁶⁷ In this text, the Sea takes a lock of hair from the unnamed wife one of the brothers in what appears to be a location in Lebanon or its vicinity (“Valley of the Cedar”). As the names of both of the brothers, Anubis and Bata, are those of gods, it has been suggested that the story may have had a mythological setting.²⁴⁶⁸ Malamat posited that this Egyptian tale was influenced by Canaanite – by which he probably meant NWS – mythology; as did Redford, who connected it with the motif of the goddess and the “lascivious sea monster”.²⁴⁶⁹

Gardiner also described the sea of *The Story of Two Brothers* as a “predatory being” grabbing at the woman, “perhaps a reminiscence of Astarte herself”.²⁴⁷⁰ It should be stressed that this motif of the sea’s abduction of a woman is found nowhere in the Ugaritic texts, and it may thus represent a native Egyptian or Southern Levantine theme.²⁴⁷¹ Apart from the NWS name of the creature, there seems little to connect the incident in the tale with Yamm of the Ugaritic myth. It is noteworthy, however, that in this story, like in the older New Kingdom text the Astarte-Papyrus, the sea is clearly personified.²⁴⁷² In the Astarte-Papyrus, the sea is called by the same name of Semitic origin, *p3 yw m mw* (2,x + 2). The form is somewhat peculiar, and it is not out of the question that the signs denote an attempt at a phonetic rendering of the NWS ‘Yammu’, although the signs denoting

²⁴⁶⁶ Faulkner, Wente & Simpson 1973, 51.

²⁴⁶⁷ P.D’Orbiney. Facsimile in Georg Möller, *Hieratische Lesestücke 2*, (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1927). Not to be confused with the Aramaic text “Tale of Two Brothers” written in demotic script.

²⁴⁶⁸ John A. Wilson, “The Story of Two Brothers” in *The Ancient Near East in Texts Relating to the Old Testament*; (ed. James B. Pritchard. 3rd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 23.

²⁴⁶⁹ Malamat 1998, 30; Redford 1992, 234.

²⁴⁷⁰ Gardiner 1932, 78.

²⁴⁷¹ Redford 1990, 830–835.

²⁴⁷² Gardiner 1932, 77.

mw are usually interpreted as determinative.²⁴⁷³ To Gardiner, this form of the word struck “a modern note”.²⁴⁷⁴

The Astarte-Papyrus, also known by the name of “Astarte and the Tribute of the Sea” (P.Amherst 19–21/XIX–XXI), includes a myth which has much more relevance to the topic of this dissertation.²⁴⁷⁵ The badly damaged Astarte-Papyrus, published by Gardiner in 1932,²⁴⁷⁶ is dated to the 18th or 19th dynasty (LBA in the Levant), c. 1300 BCE.²⁴⁷⁷ Gardiner held that the story, the oldest of the known Late Egyptian tales, was of a cosmogonic character, and he still likened the myth to the Babylonian creation epic *EE* rather than to the newly discovered Ugaritic texts. He writes that “in the Ramesside age Babylonian literature did exercise some second-hand influence upon the literature of the Egyptians”.²⁴⁷⁸

Sayce, on the other hand, connected the story of the papyrus to a fragmentary Hittite text, referred to by Sayce as K.U.B. XII, 49 (discussed in section 6.2.2). He called the Hittite legend a “very remarkable parallel” to the Egyptian text. The text translated by Sayce, featuring Kumarbi and the sea, seems identical to column KUB 12.65 iii of the Song of Hedammu. According to Sayce, like the Astarte-Papyrus, the Hittite text also relates to the concept of the deified sea.²⁴⁷⁹ To him, the Astarte-Papyrus was an epic in which the sea appears in mythological form and takes “his place by the side of the other deities of the

²⁴⁷³ New Kingdom texts often added extraneous characters to words, so it is likely that the word was simply meant to be read *p3 ym*.

²⁴⁷⁴ Gardiner 1932, 85. The usual form is *p3 ym*, a NWS loan word with the meaning of sea and lake, whence comes the name Fayyum. See Yeivin 1934, 199–200, for discussion. He pointed out that the earliest use of the Semitic word for ‘sea’ is in the Amarna texts, in the *Prayer of Ay*.

²⁴⁷⁵ For the most recent edition of the text with photos, facsimile, and discussion, see Collombert & Coulon 2000. According to them, the text testifies to the incorporation of Asiatic deities into Memphite worship under Amenhotep II, the text witnessing to the political programme. They seem to indicate that the Ennead battles the sea in the text, but do not state it outright.

²⁴⁷⁶ Photographs or collotype plates of the papyrus had already been published by P. E. Newberry in *The Amherst Papyri* (London: Quaritch, 1899), although according to Gardiner 1932, 75, H. Ibscher of the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* was the first to position the fragments at his behest. On the publication history of the papyrus, see Gardiner 1932, 77. Lord Amherst of Hackney must have obtained the papyrus prior to 1871, when according to Gardiner (1932, 74) it was first called attention to by S. Birch in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* ix, 119. I have been unable to track down the location or conditions of the discovery of the papyrus, but there is reason to suspect that it lacks provenance and was acquired on the Egyptian antiquities market. While the contents and condition of the papyrus give few reasons to doubt its authenticity, this should still be stated for the record.

²⁴⁷⁷ Sayce 1933, 56; Malamat 1998, 30. The papyrus was formerly a part of the Amherst collection, but it now belongs to the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Wilson 1969, 17.

²⁴⁷⁸ Gardiner 1931, 74, 81. Albright (1936, 18–19) was much more careful in his treatment of the evidence of the papyrus, admitting that due to its condition, “we can only guess at the original myth”.

²⁴⁷⁹ Sayce 1933, 56.

Egyptian Pantheon”.²⁴⁸⁰

The story of the Astarte-Papyrus was connected to the Ugaritic mythos by Gaster in his 1952 article entitled “The Egyptian ‘Story of Astarte’ and the Ugaritic poem of Baal”.²⁴⁸¹ Gaster suggested that the entire background of Baal’s struggle with Yamm could be explained through this Egyptian story, in which Astarte is given as a bride to appease the sea, which (or indeed, who) had gained supremacy over the gods. Gaster claimed that the general situation of the Egyptian tale accorded “perfectly with that implied in the Ugaritic poem”.²⁴⁸² Gaster connected the Astarte-Papyrus to columns I and IV of KTU 1.2 in particular.²⁴⁸³

Malamat also insisted that the Astarte-Papyrus “consists of an actual Canaanite myth” in which the sea-god who holds dominion over the earth and the other gods, is entrapped by the beauty of the nude Astarte sitting by the seashore, and is subsequently brought into conflict with the goddess’ consort, of whom there is no mention in the extant text. He further remarks that the myth reflects the violent power of the sea, threatening mariners and coastal inhabitants.²⁴⁸⁴ There are problems in these approaches of using one fragmentary text to fill in the gaps of another fragmentary text. Redford suggested that the sea’s lust for the goddess is somehow more rooted in the mythologies of the cities south of Byblos.²⁴⁸⁵ It must be stated that the sources he quotes are not from the LBA, but date from the Hellenistic era. I have discussed several of the texts in section 6.3.4.

In the Astarte-Papyrus the sea (*ym*) seems to demand tribute from the other gods, or else he will envelop the earth and the mountains (*14, y*). The tribute, which included gold, silver, and lapis lazuli, was initially to be delivered by a goddess named Renut (or Renutet), who seems to function as a messenger divinity of some sort (1, x+ 12).²⁴⁸⁶ Renutet sends a bird to find Astarte, who was, ostensibly although not explicitly, requested by the sea to be the one to bring his booty. Astarte is sent to represent the gods, and the sea demands the goddess be given to him as wife along with the tribute. The sea, who is called “the ruler” (2,

²⁴⁸⁰ Sayce 1933, 56.

²⁴⁸¹ Theodor H. Gaster, “The Egyptian ‘Story of Astarte’ and the Ugaritic Poem of Baal”, *BiOr* 9 (1952) 81–85.

²⁴⁸² Gaster 1952, 82.

²⁴⁸³ Gaster 1952, 82–85. Also Albright 1968, 116.

²⁴⁸⁴ Malamat 1998, 30.

²⁴⁸⁵ Redford 1992, 45–46.

²⁴⁸⁶ While messenger divinities are a staple of Ugaritic myths, in the Ugaritic texts they usually travel in pairs.

x+ 6),²⁴⁸⁷ saw the “furious and tempestuous” goddess sitting by the shore of the sea apparently in torn clothes, singing and laughing at the sea, and the two exchange words (2, x+ 18–3, I). As the sea solicits the Ennead of the gods to give Astarte as his wife, she seems to be awarded a throne and made a part of the Ennead (3, y).²⁴⁸⁸ The gods of the Ennead must relinquish their jewellery to make up the weight of the tribute on the scales.

The rest of the papyrus is broken, and it is difficult to say how the story would have progressed apart from the fact that it seemed to go on for quite a while.²⁴⁸⁹ Helck suggested that the goddess was attempting to beguile (“*zu betören*”) the sea with music and her nudity.²⁴⁹⁰ While it is not expressly said in the text that the goddess is nude, it is implied by the torn state of her clothes. Gardiner interpreted the scene so that the goddess was in tears, as she found her task disagreeable.²⁴⁹¹ Albright, on the other hand, interpreted the Sea of the text as a “friend of Astarte”.²⁴⁹² I would submit an alternative – that the dishevelled state of the goddess’ clothes merely reflects her extensive travels between her dominion and that of the gods and between the dominion of the gods and the human world, whether in search of the Sea or in flight from him – or even in flight from the other gods and their demands.

It should be noted that the interpretation that the sea is demanding tribute of the other gods is based on Gardiner’s interpretation of the text. Prior to his reconstruction of the events by Gardiner,²⁴⁹³ there was some confusion as to the recipient and the giver of the tribute. Gardiner based his hypothesis at least partly on the *Tale of the Two Brothers* (“though in still more masterful and tyrannical a fashion”), which is a later text. He also pointed out that this interpretation “would be quite a new departure in Egyptian fiction”.²⁴⁹⁴ The romantic or erotic tension between Astarte and the sea, also based on Gardiner’s interpretation, was not present in the previous interpretations, which revolved around Astarte’s coming to

²⁴⁸⁷ At least according to Gardiner 1932, 78–79.

²⁴⁸⁸ So Wilson 1969, 18; Gardiner 1932, 80. Helck (1983, 222) thought that these gestures are merely a part of normal polite conduct between the gods.

²⁴⁸⁹ Only two of the proposed 15 columns (according to Gardiner the papyrus consisted of 15 pages on the *recto*-side and 5–6 on the *verso*) remain, and only a few of the sentences are preserved in their entirety, mostly on pp. 1–2. Gardiner 1932, 74–75; Helck 1983, 220. The extant columns are from the beginning of the text, as there are mere seven lines (“and probably more than this”) missing from the top of the papyrus. Gardiner 1981, 76a, 81.

²⁴⁹⁰ Helck 1983, 220.

²⁴⁹¹ Gardiner 1932, 79.

²⁴⁹² Albright 1936, 18.

²⁴⁹³ Gardiner 1932, 77–78.

²⁴⁹⁴ Gardiner 1932, 81.

Egypt. This is an important thing to consider, as this interpretation has also had an effect on the interpretation of the Ugaritic myth. For example, Redford writes of Yamm as “the avaricious monster who lords it over the gods and lusts after the beautiful goddess Astarte”, and that the goddess is “beset by the water monster” in Levantine versions of the myth, from which the Egyptian story of Astarte was translated.²⁴⁹⁵ This fits perfectly with Gardiner’s interpretation of the Egyptian myth, but seems poorly supported by the Ugaritic material.

This interpretation was later followed, for example, by Smith, who listed five motifs shared by the Astarte-Papyrus and the Ugaritic text: 1) the claim of tribute by the sea, 2) the payment of tribute, 3) the initiative against the sea, 4) the response of Baal to fight against the sea and 5) the sea’s title of “ruler”.²⁴⁹⁶ Most of these points of contact seem somewhat contentious. There may exist some broad similarities in motif between the texts, but points 1) and 2) are rather poorly attested in the Ugaritic texts (‘tribute’, *argm*, is mentioned by El in KTU 1.2 I 38 as something which Baal should deliver to Yamm, but it is not claimed by Yamm, albeit Yamm’s claims are not well understood due to the fragmentary nature of the text). Tribute ([t]y) is mentioned in association with the sea or Yamm, according to De Moor, not in the Baal Cycle itself but in the tablet RIH 78/3+30:14’–16’,²⁴⁹⁷ which reads:

[w]yirš.sn.p.ln.dym.hw	And he demands 2/3 from us, that of the Sea it (is)
[t]y.ugrtym.hw.	tribute of the Ugarititians, it (is)
[ks]p.hw.dym.hw.d.ugrtym	silver it (is), that of the Sea it (is), that of the Ugaritians

The passage is difficult to interpret, but as its context seems to be the demand by the pharaoh Setnakhte to the Ugaritian King Ammurapi of payments made to the Ugaritians in exchange for the support of the Egyptians, the implication of the passage may be simply to state that the funds have been spent and are no more: the tribute has been altered into ships, grains, and *hacksilber*.

Perhaps in this instance *ugrtym* could also be translated as ‘fields’, paralleling the idea of the sea, with the tribute of the fields being grain.²⁴⁹⁸ De Moor, however, suggested that the “money” had been donated to the sea-god Yamm by the people of Ugarit, who “mockingly identified YHWH with Yammu”.²⁴⁹⁹ It is unclear what an Egyptian pharaoh should have cared about the

²⁴⁹⁵ Redford 1990, 831–833; Redford 1992, 44.

²⁴⁹⁶ Smith 1994b, 23.

²⁴⁹⁷ De Moor 1996, 231.

²⁴⁹⁸ Perhaps the ‘tribute’ of the sea is to be interpreted as fish, murex, ships, or timber for their building.

²⁴⁹⁹ De Moor 1996, 232.

replacement of the name of one Semitic deity with another for the purpose of mocking either one of them. Point 4), on the other hand, can scarcely be found in the Egyptian text, and with regard to point 5), there exists no etymological connection between the Ugaritic *zbl* and the Egyptian *hq3*, which is what is found inside a cartouche in *l x +8*. Certainly both are titular epithets, but one cannot assume that there was a necessary connection between them. Furthermore, the word *hq3* was not an unusual title of villains or maleficent divinities in Egyptian texts (given, for example, to Anubis in PT 805).

Mentioned on line 4, 15, *y* is the god Seth, whom the Egyptians likened unto the NWS Baal.²⁵⁰⁰ It appears that Seth is unimpressed by the sea's threats (he "seated himself calmly"), and he seems to act as the polar opposite of the enraged Ugaritic Baal. It is possible that the sea and Seth battled later on,²⁵⁰¹ but no evidence of this remains. This interpretation could be informed by Seth's role as the slayer of Apep, or both of these roles of Seth may have been informed by his association with the NWS Baal. For example, the Berlin Medical Papyrus (P.Berl.) 189 mentions the sea (*ym*) hearing the voice of Seth, and the Hearst Medical Papyrus (P.Hearst) 11.13 mentions the sea (*w3d-wr*) as having been charmed by Seth. Some support for the interpretation has also been found in one of the remedies in P.Hearst 170 (11.13),²⁵⁰² which features a spell against a "*Tnt-amw* disease"; here we find the lines "As Seth fended off²⁵⁰³ the Sea (*w3d-wr*), so will Seth fend off you, O *Tnt-amw*". Gardiner suggested that in the end, the sea was conciliated rather than conquered, although there is no hint as to how the story of the Astarte-Papyrus should have finished.²⁵⁰⁴ Ultimately, we do not know what happened between Astarte and the sea in the Astarte-Papyrus.

In Egyptian sources, Astarte was usually called the daughter of the sun-god Re, but in the Astarte Papyrus she is dubbed the daughter of Ptah.²⁵⁰⁵ Their relationship and Ptah's position as the head of the gods may be due to the fact that the text was written in Memphis rather than due to any significant theological

²⁵⁰⁰ Ritner 1997, 35; Helck 1983, 217, calls it the *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of the weather-god's name. Also Redford 1992, 117.

²⁵⁰¹ So Ritner 1997, 35, according to whom from "other sources, it appears that the Sea is ultimately vanquished in the combat by Seth". What these other sources are, one can only guess.

²⁵⁰² Walter Wreszinski, *Der Londoner medizinische Papyrus (und der Papyrus Hearst)* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912).

²⁵⁰³ Or 'charmed'.

²⁵⁰⁴ Gardiner 1932, 81.

²⁵⁰⁵ Edwards 1955, 51.

association of the divinities.²⁵⁰⁶ According to Stadelmann, Memphis was the centre of Asiatic influence in ancient Egypt and it was through the city of Memphis that Canaanite literature entered into Egyptian society.²⁵⁰⁷ It is difficult to ascertain how the ancient Egyptians interpreted or received the story, which only exists in a single exemplar, but it does not seem as though they were that concerned with the awesome and mythicized power of the sea.

It has also been noted that during the Ramesside period, to which the text dates, certain texts were copied so carelessly that it seems their respective scribes had not fully understood the content of their exercises.²⁵⁰⁸ It is possible that there is some kind of connection between the Ugaritic and the Egyptian texts, as NWS mythos was somewhat popular in Egypt during the late Middle and early New Kingdom, but it must be impressed that this is the only exemplar of the text or any text of this kind from the area. And yet it is noteworthy that the papyrus was connected to the Babylonian *EE* by Gardiner and to the 'Hittite Legend of the Sea' by Sayce before the Ugaritic texts had yet become widely available, so some similarity in theme is clearly recognizable.

According to Ritner, Astarte had been adopted into the cult and mythology of Egypt by the beginning of the New Kingdom. Ritner held that the story has an indigenous Egyptian setting, even though it is parallel to the Ugaritic myth.²⁵⁰⁹ Helck suggested that while it may be futile to look for the text's *Vorlage*, the cultural sphere in which the myth was formed should be more easily traced. He came to the conclusion that neither the topic of the text nor its details are Egyptian, but rather North Syrian and Hittite.²⁵¹⁰ Redford, on the other hand, argued that the origin of the hero-monster motif featuring the 'lecherous sea', while belonging to the same tradition as the Ugaritic myth, arose in the cities south of Byblos; he includes examples from Aphek, Tyre, Joppa, Ashkelon, and Gaza,²⁵¹¹ which I have discussed in a previous section. Egyptian religious conceptions were heavily influenced by Eastern Mediterranean or NWS ideas in the LBA. It has also been suggested that the Astarte-Papyrus contains a cult legend of Astarte of Memphis.²⁵¹² Stadelmann, for instance, saw in the text a

²⁵⁰⁶ Helck 1983, 219.

²⁵⁰⁷ Stadelmann 1967, 127.

²⁵⁰⁸ Faulkner, Wente & Simpson 1973, 10.

²⁵⁰⁹ Ritner 1997, 35.

²⁵¹⁰ Helck 1983, 216, 223.

²⁵¹¹ Redford 1992, 45–46.

²⁵¹² Helck 1983, 215. He calls the goddess "die fremde 'Aphrodite' Herodots".

Memphite creation myth.²⁵¹³ What we must conclude from all of this is that while there may be points of connection in motif and detail between the stories, and there may even have been a genetic connection between the narratives of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle and the Astarte Papyrus, the fragmentary nature of the extant texts does not allow us to *ascertain* as much.

Whether there is a relation between this Egyptian tale and the epic myths from Ugarit, it needs pointing out that the beginning of the Astarte-Papyrus appears to present a cosmogonic myth, in which the union of sea and earth produces “the four regions of the earth” (*I, x+ 6-7*). The creation of the world preceding the Combat Myth is something which has not been found in the Ugaritic texts, despite numerous attempts to locate (or assume) it. The author holds that one may not have – and indeed need not have – existed, due to the general disinterest which military peoples have toward origin myths (as discussed previously). The existence of the Egyptian text does not allow us to postulate the existence of a cosmogonic myth preceding the battle of Yamm and Baal in the Baal Cycle, but it does give room for some speculation. One facet that requires careful consideration is the seeming direction of influence. While the NWS milieu was traditionally seen as the borrower of Egyptian and other surrounding influences,²⁵¹⁴ it would appear quite clear that when it comes to the Combat Myth, it is the Egyptians who have done much of the borrowing during the time of the writing of these stories.

What may hold relevance to the campaigns of the Mesopotamian monarchs to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea mentioned in Chapter 4 is the El-Amarna literary or scholarly text EA 340²⁵¹⁵ from the ‘Canaanite group’ (EA 227–380), which seems to refer to a similar theme. The New Kingdom text, dating roughly to the 14th century, is short and fragmentary, but line 6 features the word ‘sea’, A.AB.BA. Mention is also made of a king, LUGAL (*šarru*), a chariot, and clouds in heaven (*er-pe-ti eš-tu AN*). Line 3 may refer to Lebanon or Laban (^{K1}*la-ba-ni URU^{K1}*). Unfortunately, only eight lines of the text have been partially preserved, so it is difficult to tell whether it is the NWS Combat Myth that is being referenced here. But as the Amarna letters famously contain exchanges

²⁵¹³ Stadelmann 1967, 509.

²⁵¹⁴ E.g. Wyatt 2005 [1987], 19: “Suffice to say that there is undoubtedly contact between the Egyptian and Sumero-Akkadian traditions, and with the Canaanite world lying between the two cultural matrices, it should occasion no surprise to find traces of the same tradition”.

²⁵¹⁵ J. A. Knudzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907-15).

between the Thutmosid administration of the 18th dynasty and their Eastern Mediterranean correspondents, it is entirely possible it relates to or references for the Egyptians the myth so popular with the North West Semites at the time. If, as I present in this thesis, the myth functioned as a foundational myth in the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean, it would have been important for the scribes of the Empire to know about. It is also through the myth that the petty kings of the Levantine littoral would have shown their obedience to their Egyptian overlords.

On the other hand, while inarguably a myth of conflict and even a Combat Myth, *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* (P.Chester Beatty I), a New Kingdom story from the time of the 20th dynasty, has seldom been compared with the NWS Combat Myth. There is no mention of an aqueous foe in the story, but it does bear at least some affinity to the struggle between Baal and Yamm; in the narrative, Horus and Seth contend for kingship. It is Horus and not Seth(-Baal) who eventually becomes the king of Egypt, which in itself may serve as a vague reference to the Asiatic myth, perhaps even as a subversion of the *topos*. Seth's role had become increasingly adversarial in Egyptian mythos following the end of the reign of the Asiatic Hyksos, although references to the conflict between the two divinities do go back to Old Kingdom times. Seth, whom the Hyksos (who were at least partially NWS) had worshipped as Baal, later became associated with Apep and the Greek Typhon, essentially becoming his own worst enemy. Baal had become Yamm.²⁵¹⁶

6.6 Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions on the use of the NWS Combat Myth in the legitimization of monarchic power in the broader ANE. A motif which in the NWS milieu developed into a staple of mythology became in the East Semitic cultural area entrenched in political ideology. The words 'sea' and 'king' appear together in many ancient NWS texts dating back to the Mari of the OB period, featuring in the epics of LBA Ugarit, all the way down to Biblical texts dating to the Persian period and later. The sea is also a significant element in many Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions, figuring in the feats of many, and arguably the most

²⁵¹⁶ See Töyräänvuori 2013.

prominent, of the kings following the Urukian Lugal-zage-si and Sargon of Agade.

The character of Sargon was central to the formation of this tradition, and while little is known of the historicity of his campaigns, understanding these later traditions without comprehending the ideological programme of the Sargonic rulers is impossible. While in the NWS traditions one is able to track and trace the development of an ever-expanding mythological constellation, in the Assyrian and Babylonian texts one can follow the motif from royal inscription to royal inscription, in a non-mythological and politicized form. Both developments present us with an example of an ‘evolving social memory’, to coin a term from Edelman. It is the malleability and adjustability of social memory which allowed the motif to survive from king to king, and from powerbase to powerbase.

Based on a review of the texts, it seems that there was a resurgence in use of the myth in the legitimization of royal ideology in the Neo-Assyrian period, beginning with Tiglath-Pileser I. The dynasty used the figure of Sargon of Agade and his reign quite openly as a source of legitimization for their power and as the basis of their royal ideology and propaganda. This shows that we are dealing with an extremely long-lived tradition, born at least in part from the political aspirations of Mesopotamian kingdoms toward the economies and resources of the lands along the shore of the Eastern Mediterranean. The phrase “from the Upper sea to the Lower sea” could certainly be used to invoke the idea of great kingship even without any mythological connotations or actual historical basis to the claim.

Nonetheless, the variation that we find in the expression of this concept indicates that it entailed more than empty pomp. Not every Mesopotamian king employed the phrase in their inscriptions, so the use of the phrase may have implied actual presence in the coastal areas, at least some of the time. While it is possible that, at least to a certain extent, this language of legitimization employed the mythological backdrop of the Storm-God’s battle against the sea, the opposite also held true. The formation of the myth was founded in historical reality. The mythology sprang from an actual desire and necessity to conquer coastal regions. Used to legitimize monarchic power, the mythology was then confirmed by the conquest of coastal regions – a symbolic conquest of the sea.

Subduing chaos by establishing and maintaining order and permanence was one of the primary and fundamental ideological functions of the Egyptian

king. One of the ways in which this function was presented was by the king's conquering of an enemy, which was a general theological statement of his efficacy in the role of a king.²⁵¹⁷ While it may be that maintaining an ordered society is the staple of any ruler, it seems that this Egyptian conception of divine kingship was often projected onto the NWS idea of kingship, and the NWS king was also seen as the conqueror of chaos. But there were fundamental ideological differences in the legitimization of kingship between the ancient Egyptians and the ancient NWS peoples. The main difference was that the NWS king, barring a few isolated cases, was not considered divine and his power was not legitimated by divine birth. The pharaoh was the son of god, *s3-r'*, whereas the NWS king could only aspire to be the regent or steward of his god.²⁵¹⁸

While the NWS king and his god may have had some degree of association (by which the king was seen as the agent, representative or suzerain of the god on earth), the king was not the god's son. The NWS king did not gain the legitimacy of his rule from the accident of his birth, but through the strength of his arm, which he had to *display* both to his god and to his people in order to secure his election. This is not to say that no Egyptian king came to rule by conquering his enemies and that no NWS king was awarded kingship as his heritage. It is the legitimization of kingship that made the difference; the ideal of kingship, of how a king *should* come to rule – the political narrative. These different ideologies for the establishment of kingship required different myths for their legitimization.

In ideological terms, single events or historical occurrences were not only unimportant in Egyptian society, they were abhorrent.²⁵¹⁹ The converse tendency may be observed in the ancient Semitic cultural sphere, where it was history that was of utmost importance. Nielsen described the landscape of ancient Mesopotamia as one that did not favour permanence, in large part due to its constantly changing geographic conditions.²⁵²⁰ In the NWS world, history was full

²⁵¹⁷ Wright 1988, 156; Frankfort 1948, 49.

²⁵¹⁸ It must be noted, however, that royal ideology was hardly uniform throughout Egyptian history; the king had previously been understood as the divinity's deputy, especially during the first dynasties. The two bodies of the Egyptian king are discussed, e.g. by Morenz 1992, 37ff. Still, the ancient Egyptians did seem to believe that the pharaoh had been physically procreated by the god. Frankfort (1948, 31) writes in defence of the view: "The doctrine of the divinity of kings has been viewed as a consequence of a misunderstanding – or as an elaborate fraud by men in power anxious to secure its continuation by sanctifying it. Similar pseudo-explanations have been rejected by historians and anthropologists alike [...]"

²⁵¹⁹ Frankfort 1948, 49.

²⁵²⁰ Nielsen 2012, 3. Unlike the Nile, the twin rivers of Mesopotamia change courses frequently, reshaping the landscape. The mudbrick construction of monumental buildings also made them

of singular achievement. An Egyptian king's kingship was legitimized by his participation in the cycle of divine birth, while the NWS king's kingship was legitimized by his ability to combat his enemies. It was not chaos *per se* that the NWS king had to conquer in order to establish ordered society, but actual enemies and hostile entities, to keep at bay the constant threat of usurpation.²⁵²¹ For the ancient Egyptian, the conquering of chaos was a special, explicit concern, insomuch as chaos was the opposite of *ma'at*, a concept of extreme significance. Every king's duty was to re-establish *ma'at* in the land, to reintroduce order, truth and justice into nature as well as human society.²⁵²² This is actually said in so many words in various royal inscriptions: "King Pepy II has put *ma'at* in the place of *isfet*".²⁵²³

All in all, very few instances of a Combat Myth, let alone the NWS Combat Myth, seem to be found in ancient Egyptian mythology. This may be due to the fact that myths of conflict in ancient Egypt were presented not in terms of the actual mythology of creation and divine beings, but in the person of the pharaoh. The focus was on historical, political (or in a sense, 'secular') myths. The pharaoh was the hero-warrior, the conqueror of the "Nine Bows", ²⁵²⁴ the story of whose triumphs was told again and again, often using the very same words and phrases copied from earlier tombs and monuments of pharaoh after pharaoh.²⁵²⁵

The identity of the king's enemies, in the Egyptian intellectual world referred to by the term "Nine Bows", changed from generation to generation. According to Frankfort, for this reason their actual referents were devoid of interest to the ancient Egyptian. The term "Nine Bows" was sufficient in describing them, and it was simply understood that the pharaoh triumphed over

less permanent than the stone edifices of Egypt. Nielsen also mentions that the lack of natural borders facilitated the movement of peoples, constantly bringing new ethnic groups into prominence.

²⁵²¹ Sasson 1998, 458: "In Zimri-Lim's day, the area was a veritable Serengeti Plain, where predators were most vulnerable when striking out on their own. [...] Kings were perpetually locked in a lethal version of musical chairs, such that to label some of them "usurpers" and others "legitimate heirs" is to be superfluously fussy about pedigree". It is precisely this state of affairs that made the legitimization of kingship of utmost importance and the position of the crown-prince extremely vulnerable. And it is these concerns that the mythic tradition seems to address.

²⁵²² Redford 1992, 74.

²⁵²³ Frankfort 1948, 53–54. It is also a feature of the Pyramid Texts.

²⁵²⁴ Yeivin 1934, 197: "The traditional enemies of Egypt, which in remote pre-history must have represented nine real tribes who used archery as their main weapon". In later times, of course, the identity of the nine bows became a matter of symbolic geography, probably similar to the list of monstrous rivers symbolizing hostile nations.

²⁵²⁵ Discussed, e.g. by Yeivin 1934, 194.

them. This was the narrative which contained the unchanging and conventional truth of the matter. Historical details may or may not have been added to the narrative, but to the ancient Egyptian they were “mere embellishments of text or design”. According to Frankfort, the perennial truth that the figure of the pharaoh ruled supreme among men was what was of real importance.²⁵²⁶

Egyptian monuments hid the individuality of kings behind generalities and their few distinctive features usually belie only the conventions of particular eras, not of particular rulers. The texts and portraits are concerned with ideal rulers. In texts, the singular and the historical were eschewed in favour of the traditional. Even when specific historical facts are enumerated, they are often merely copied from the inscriptions of earlier rulers (e.g. Ramesses III copying the conquests of Ramesses II, who in turn had copied them from Thutmose III). Frankfort does not mention the possibility that these later rulers could have copied not only the texts but the campaigns and feats of their predecessors, but such emulation of acts is within the realm of possibility.²⁵²⁷ These conquest narratives may have had some historical basis, but often they exemplify idealized political mythology, an imagined history that became a reality because it was so written.

The witness of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions seems to display a converse tendency: they enumerate individual achievements and meticulously record historical details, even though many of them seem to be amassed from the achievements of foregone rulers or reported more than once in a single inscription, all in the interests of portraying a particular ruler not as one in a long chain of rulers, but as the greatest king ever to have ruled, the culmination of the succession of history. Nielsen suggested that in spite of the impermanence (“destabilizing forces”) inherent in Mesopotamian cultures, they displayed a remarkable degree of ideological continuity, for which the administrative centres and the scribal tradition were partly responsible. The cities were the legacies of kings, sustaining both the intellectual and material culture by carving the past on their walls.²⁵²⁸

The creation of the ancient Egyptian world was not born out of conflict, but the creation of the united Egyptian state under the legendary King Narmer in the Early Dynastic period had been – or so it appears in the legend, which one

²⁵²⁶ Frankfort 1948, 48.

²⁵²⁷ Frankfort 1948, 46–48.

²⁵²⁸ Nielsen 2012, 3–4.

could even call the foundation myth of the ancient Egyptian kingdom. The Egyptian monarchy was regarded as being as old as the world, for the creator god, whose descendant and successor the pharaoh was, had assumed kingship for himself on the day of creation. The Egyptians practised divine kingship and extremely centralized government, which it was reflected on every level of the practical organization of the Egyptian commonwealth. Frankfort pointed out that in 3000 years of recorded history, there were no revolutions or popular uprisings against this social order even in times when the administrative machinery broke down.²⁵²⁹ The same cannot be said of the areas ruled by the ancient NWS monarchs, who were often forced to record the quelling of revolts even in their own royal inscriptions.

The basis for Egyptian kingship was very different from that of the NWS peoples. The NWS king sought the legitimacy of his power through participation in the warrior-god's conquest of his mythicized foe, whereas in Egypt the pharaoh, the son of Re, performed the role of the warrior-god, conquering Egypt's actual – if in number and iconography at least partially mythicized – foes. There also seems to have been no real connection of mythical foes to the concept of the sea in Egyptian mythology, despite the battle of Re and Apep taking place in the sea. Due to the influence of the Nile on Egyptian society, the Mediterranean Sea, although an important trade-route to the Cypro-Levantine world, was of relatively little cosmogonic significance to the ancient Egyptian.²⁵³⁰

The references to the Combat Myth and the conquering of the sea which we find in Egyptian texts may come down to the 15th dynasty of the Middle Kingdom, as the Hyksos, the “foreign rulers”, are proposed to have been of Amorite stock.²⁵³¹ It would make sense for some Amorite myths or legends to have circulated in Egypt during their reign, and indeed to have lent influence on the genesis of Egyptian and Egyptianizing traditions of the Combat Myth. Otherwise, it is extremely doubtful that any *indigenously* Egyptian myth influenced the NWS Combat Myth, outside of importing a thin veneer of stylistic, iconographic influence, bringing in Egyptian colour and fashion to the narrative

²⁵²⁹ Frankfort 1948, 30–32, 43.

²⁵³⁰ This is not to suggest that the ancient Egyptians were not a maritime people, as is sometimes claimed. During the time of the Egyptian Empire of the early New Kingdom, the Mediterranean coast up to the Orontes River belonged to the Egyptian sphere of interest and was maintained through its maritime power. Redford 1992, 167. The later Ptolemaic rulers also maintained a famous armada, which played a role in the Roman Civil War (e.g. in the battle of Actium).

²⁵³¹ Redford 1992, 107.

for example in the form of the Memphite smith – as ancient Ugarit was also inarguably a part of the Egyptian Empire in Asia.

The Book of Job is perhaps the book most connected in modern literature with the ANE Combat Myth in the Bible. While there may be strong allusions to the Combat Myth in Job, the context of the references is far removed from royal ideology (where Yahweh has completely usurped the symbolism to the exclusion of any regal remnants in the text). What makes the text of the Book of Job curious is that it seems to contain traditions from both the NWS cultural sphere and the Mesopotamian area – and, as discussed previously, possibly even the Egyptian. This interweaving of the material may be explained by the nature of the text, featuring the list of monstrous creatures discussed in this dissertation, in which a cluster of similar narratives has apparently been traded in tandem in order to preserve them. Another explanation is that the text was a didactic work for the education of the monarch akin to the Babylonia *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (SAACT 7). This is extremely speculative, however, and there is no explicit connection between Job and kingship. The absence of overt references to NWS kingship is why I have discussed only a few Joban passages in this dissertation, and yet the book is not without relevance.

The word ‘sea’ is found 11 times in the Book of Job, and in addition to this, several sea monsters familiar from the Ugaritic texts are featured in the book. The sea is mentioned in verses 6:3, 7:12, 9:8, 11:9, 12:8, 14:11, 26:12, 28:14, 36:27, 36:30, 38:8, 38:16 and 41:31. The water imagery in Job has been studied recently, for example by Nömmik.²⁵³² In addition to several of the verses paralleling the word ‘sea’ with one of the monsters, the concept of confining the sea, the anthropomorphization of the sea, the trampling of the sea, mentioning of the monsters Leviathan and Behemoth (discussed in section 5.1.3.), and the sea featured in the theophany of the Storm-God are all found in the Joban verses, forming almost like a concise compendium of the different traditions discussed in this dissertation.²⁵³³

²⁵³² Nömmik 2014. See especially his discussion on the establishment of limits to the water as reflecting Yahweh’s majesty on pp. 289–291.

²⁵³³ Joosten 2013b believed, in fact, that the Book of Job represents an intermediary or transitional stage between CBH and LBH texts, which means that older traditions may have converged in it.

7. Summary and Concluding Essay

This final chapter of the dissertation contains a summary of the findings of the examination and what conclusions can be drawn from them. The findings are presented in the form of a concluding essay, with a brief summary at the end. At the beginning of the work, I volunteered to demonstrate the use of the Combat Myth, the myth of the Storm-God's battle with the sea, in the resolution of the crisis of monarchy in the emergent NWS kingdoms of the Southeast Mediterranean in the Iron Age by using a method of textual triangulation. I assert that the question of whether or not the myth of symbolic combat originally between the divinized ancestor of the Akkadian Sargonids and the Mediterranean Sea was ever used as a foundational myth of the Pre-Exilic, still mostly polytheistic NWS 'Davidic' kingship in Palestine is a matter of speculation and not hard evidence. But based on the *analogy* of preceding, concurrent, and continuing traditions in the neighbouring and surrounding cultural sphere, as well as the vestiges retained in the Biblical record itself, there is certainly enough evidence to strongly suspect that it may have been.

The thesis is laid on the foundation that remnants of the NWS Combat Myth are found in the texts of the HB. Vestigial traces of the myth have been read in the texts of the HB ever since Herman Gunkel proposed his *Chaoskampf* hypothesis in the late 19th century. According to Gunkel, certain Biblical passages owe influence to the Babylonian epic *Enūma eliš*, but ever since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts an ancient NWS origin for these mythic fragments has been discussed. An interpretation of the Combat Myth as a political myth was advanced in recent decades especially by Nicolas Wyatt and Mark S. Smith. The oldest traditions of the Combat Myth, an extremely long-lived tradition born at least in part from the political aspirations of Mesopotamian kingdoms toward the economies and resources of the Eastern Mediterranean, have been traced to the Sargonic and Old Babylonian periods, especially in connection with the cult centre of the Upper Euphratean Storm-God in Aleppo.

The most pertinent of the early witnesses to the myth are from the Amorite kingdom of Mari, where we find mention of King Zimri-Lim being awarded the weapons which, according to an Aleppan diplomat, the Amorite Storm-God had used in defeating the sea. These witnesses were examined in Chapter 4. The most complete iteration of the Combat Myth is from the city of Ugarit, whose epic

poetry witnesses to the further mythologization of the motif. The Ugaritic evidence was discussed in Chapter 5. The comparative traditions from the ANE were discussed in Chapter 6, containing both further examples of the Amorite myth, different developments of the mythic tradition in Egyptian and Mesopotamian witnesses, as well as the non-mythological transmission of the tradition in Mesopotamian, for the most part Neo-Assyrian, royal inscriptions.

The Old Babylonian Evidence from Mari Sets the Stage

The epistolary and inscriptional evidence from Mari contains three important topics: the transportation of the Storm-God's divine weapon, by means of which the political ideology was transmitted to vassal states;²⁵³⁴ the Ordeal by River practised in the Mariote city of Id;²⁵³⁵ and familial terminology used in the political correspondence of Amorite kings, which gives insight into their system of sponsored kingship.²⁵³⁶ The brief reference to the myth in the Mari text FM 7 38 has been connected to a military campaign to the Mediterranean coast by Zimri-Lim's predecessor, Yahdun-Lim.²⁵³⁷ In his royal inscription, the earlier king records the arrival of his army at the seaboard. Having reached the coast, Yahdun-Lim offered the sea "the sacrifices of his great kingship", and had his troops make a washing in the sea as a symbolic act. While the myth itself is not *explicitly* mentioned in the inscription, it does seem to function as its underlying, subtextual justification. The performance of the myth for the benefit of the king's army must be noted especially.

The inscription recalls language and phrases used by the Sargonic monarchs centuries previously in the legitimation of their newfound Akkadian dynasty.²⁵³⁸ The Sargonic Akkadian and OB Amorite rulers conducted military campaigns to the Mediterranean Sea, likely physically carrying with them and at the head of their army the divine weapons of the Storm-God of the Upper Euphrates. In propagandistic lapidary inscriptions, the monarchs recorded the washing of the weapons in the sea upon the completion of their campaigns, and it

²⁵³⁴ Cf. section 4.2.

²⁵³⁵ Cf. section 4.4.

²⁵³⁶ Cf. section 5.1.2.

²⁵³⁷ Cf. section 4.3.

²⁵³⁸ Cf. section 4.1.

was through this symbolic victory over the sea, shared by the king and the Storm-God, that the power of the monarchs was legitimized. Reaching the sea was evidence of divine favour.²⁵³⁹

Parallels have been drawn between Mari and the Biblical ‘Patriarchal era’. The idea was that, as Mari had been an Amorite society that flourished prior to the first half of the second millennium, corresponding roughly to the projected age of the Hebrew patriarchs, the new-found insight into the Mari period could be used to reconstruct – or at least colour our conceptions of – the hypothesized Patriarchal era. While there are some onomastic and linguistic similarities shared by the Mari texts and the texts of the HB, drawing parallels – let alone direct, genetic parallels – between texts of such extreme temporal distance is to be discouraged. The diachronicity of the textual traditions cannot be fixed by inserting texts from the archives of Late Bronze Age Ugarit into the interim.

Texts from Emar and Alalakh are important in regard to the formative period of the Combat Myth, as both were involved in the political system of the interconnected Amorite kingdoms in the Amorite kingdom period, either as vassals or sponsored kingdoms of Yamhad.²⁵⁴⁰ The texts from Emar do not feature the Combat Myth, so the texts function as negative evidence. The texts from Alalakh, on the other hand, witness to the political system itself: the rulers of Alalakh were called ‘servants of Adad’ when they were in the position of vassal, but they used the title ‘Beloved of Adad’ when they were in the position of a sponsored kingdom, with their dynastic line derived directly from Aleppo. The Idrimi inscription is also important, as it witnesses to the spread of Amorites and their political system into the area of Palestine in the Late Bronze Age. The NWS or Amorite Combat Myth was also later likely used in the construction of the Babylonian epic *Enūma eliš*, which in its extant form dates to the late Middle Assyrian period.²⁵⁴¹

The composition of the text is a much-discussed topic: some have dated it as contemporary to the Mari letters, the era of Hammurapi, which seems unlikely, while others have dated its composition later even than the Baal Cycle. Wherever the truth of its dating may lie, it seems that the Babylonian myth is a composite of different traditions, one of which is surely the Amorite myth. The Babylonian

²⁵³⁹ Cf. section 6.4.2.1.

²⁵⁴⁰ Cf. section 6.3.1., section 6.3.2.

²⁵⁴¹ Cf. section 6.4.1.

myth features aspects not found in the NWS myth, such as the creation of the world and the creation of man, but the shared core function of the myth was to elevate Marduk, the god of Babylon, as the supreme deity. As defeating the sea was one of the *prerequisites* of universal kingship, Marduk *had* to defeat the sea (Tiamat) to become the king of the gods, as did Baal and later Yahweh. Like the Egyptian pharaoh's conquering of the 'Nine Bows', the Mesopotamian king was truly a king only after having made a successful expedition to the seaboard – or at least after managing to present himself as having done so in royal propaganda. It is unclear at which point the Mediterranean Sea came to be thought of as a divine entity (it may well have been considered thus even before the time of the first kings to make the Mediterranean campaign), but based on textual evidence, it seems feasible to suggest that the motif of subjugating the sea only came about as a result of these royal campaigns.

Although the Ugaritic texts come from a period roughly halfway between the amassing of the Mari archives and the oldest projected Biblical texts, drawing intertextual parallels between them is unwise not only because of the hundreds of years of time spanning the corpora, but also the sheer geographic distance between them. This is why I fashioned a method of textual triangulation for the comparison of these diachronic and geographically remote source texts, in order to find the *common elements* shared by these traditions and to explicate both the details and the broad strokes on which the diachronous or age-variant texts agree.²⁵⁴² My working hypothesis was that elements in the older traditions which can be seen continuing or experiencing resurgence in the younger traditions must also have existed in the interim, between the older and the younger traditions, even if no textual witnesses survive.

The Baal Cycle from Ugarit as Central to the Understanding of the Tradition

Although centuries younger than the OB witnesses, the LBA Ugaritic Baal Cycle features a famous attestation of the Combat Myth between the Storm-God and the sea.²⁵⁴³ This narrative seems to have developed into a foundational myth for monarchic rule among the NWS peoples, serving to legitimize the idea of

²⁵⁴² Cf. section 3.1.

²⁵⁴³ Cf. section 5.1.1.

kingship and to resolve the crisis of sovereign rule.²⁵⁴⁴ Unlike the earlier historical texts from the OB period, the myth of the Baal Cycle consists of a collection of loosely connected texts of epic poetry, and it is in narrative form, complete with dialogue and action. And though it is younger, it seems that the text contains older material either from Mari or Aleppo, as Ugarit had political relations with both kingdoms harking back to the OB period. While the myth seems to have its roots in the Aleppan cult centre of the weather-god, it was through the acts of the kings of Mari that the myth blossomed, and it is in the LBA Ugarit that we find it in full bloom.

The Combat Myth, as it is known to us from the first two tablets of the Baal Cycle, features the proclamation of Baal's kingship, the high point in the epic. The Ugaritic myth witnesses to the on-going *mythologization* of the motif. It is important to note that it was through the act of defeating the Sea that the Storm-God made a claim to kingship. As the text stands, it is difficult to make a coherent narrative out of it.²⁵⁴⁵ In light of the older Amorite texts from Mari, the important features are the Storm-God's use of *weapons* in defeating the Sea and his subsequent *proclamation as king*. While many aspects of the narrative remain unclear, these particular features of the text are well supported.

In addition to the Ugaritic texts, the iconography of the LBA may also help elucidate both the Ugaritic texts and possibly even some of the later Hebrew texts.²⁵⁴⁶ One of the most important, and thus far unrecognized, characteristics of the god Yamm revealed by iconographic evidence from the Syrian area is the connection of the god with the monarchic animal – the horse – an association that persisted on the Levantine littoral well into the Hellenistic period. The other important piece of iconographic evidence displays the sea as a winged and armed deity, found in Syrian glyptic not only in scenes of battle with the Storm-God, but also in the role of the mediator of kingship, between the king of the gods and the mortal king, in so-called presentation scenes. The ancient Semitic king ruled with the authority of the Storm-God, with the god's power and prestige, presenting himself as the representative of the divinity to his people. But it was through the sea that the king was made. As the Storm-God's victory over the sea legitimized kingship, so did the character of Yamm itself mediate it. Yamm was as necessary

²⁵⁴⁴ Cf. section 6.3.3.

²⁵⁴⁵ Cf. section 3.2.

²⁵⁴⁶ Cf. section 5.3.

for the dynastic succession of NWS kingship as its patron, the dynastic Storm-God.

Iconographic evidence from the Syrian area, particularly from the temple of the Storm-God on the Aleppo citadel, also suggests that the weapons of the Storm-God in the OB period were portrayed as a mace and a spear.²⁵⁴⁷ Texts from the OB period onward seem to present a rather clear picture of what divine weapons were used for. The weapons were housed in temples, and their main function was to *witness* oaths, treaties, judgements, the sealing of documents, and so forth. They also had a number of symbolic functions, for which sake they could be paraded out of the temples, either in celebration or before marching armies. Use of the divine weapons in the coronation ceremonies of kings has also been proposed. In particular, the mentions of the divine weapons of the Storm-God of Aleppo in the two texts from the royal archives of Mari have been connected with the concept of a coronation ceremony, but the extant textual evidence from the period seems overwhelmingly to favour uses other than coronation. One of the most important functions of the divine weapons was to be carried as standards at the spearhead of marching armies, and it was through the physical manifestation of the weapons that the political mythology was transported to the recipients of the Amorite traditions.

Even at the time of the writing of the Hebrew texts, the idea of the weapon of the Storm-God was used to bolster the authority of the monarch.²⁵⁴⁸ While the washing of the weapon is not mentioned in the Biblical texts, they do include some allusions to weapons. Several different kinds of weapons are mentioned in the HB; those in connection with Yahweh portrayed as a weather deity seem most relevant with regard to the motif of the Combat Myth, as finding them in a mythic constellation containing other aspects of the narrative may be one of the ways in which the mythic pattern might be traced in later traditions. Accordingly, it is in the passages where Yahweh is described as the armed Storm-God that the motif of divine combat is most apparent.²⁵⁴⁹ In these passages we find weapons associated with the Storm-God in the Syrian and Anatolian area, such as thunder and lightning in Is. 30:30 (1 Sam. 7:10, 2 Sam. 22:14/Ps. 18:24 and Ps. 29:3–5), lightning and hammer in Jer. 23:29, a club and a weapon of war in Jer. 51:20, and

²⁵⁴⁷ Cf. section 6.2.3.

²⁵⁴⁸ Cf. section 4.2.

²⁵⁴⁹ Cf. section 5.4.

an iron rod and a forged weapon in Ps. 2:9. With regard to the Storm-God's weapons in the HB, the divergent traditions of the Combat Myth become apparent.

The most important concepts regarding the monarchic use of the Combat Myth in the Baal Cycle, along with Baal's defeat of the sea using his weapons, are the possible royal adoption scene in the broken column of the first tablet and the use of Amorite political terminology.²⁵⁵⁰ This diplomatic language contained both the familial terms used by kings to refer to one other and the epithets which marked a ruler as either having the patronage of the Storm-God of Aleppo or lacking it. The terminology includes vocabulary of the system of sponsored kingship between the Amorite kingdoms, the possible enthronement of Baal, and the list of rivers which incidentally seems to preserve local traditions of the Combat Myth; the latter was likely added to the text of the Baal Cycle to indicate Baal's total domination of his enemy.²⁵⁵¹ The presence of the monsters that Yahweh battles is another feature in the texts of the HB which has been connected with the Combat Myth.

Due to its rare lexical items and recognizable format, the monster-list is one of the most easily discernible elements to detect in the much later texts of the HB, even if the context and function in which the list is employed in these later texts is different. While the context to which it is attached has been altered, the overarching theme remains similar: the subjugation of the monstrous creatures on the list is used to exalt Yahweh. Some of the monsters mentioned in the Biblical texts find easy parallels in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, such as Leviathan and Tunnan, while others like Behemoth and Rahab do not. Apart from texts mentioning the Deep (*tehôm*), which has been connected with the Babylonian Tiamat, few of the Biblical creatures find equivalents in the host of creatures mentioned in the *Enūma eliš* – although some of them, like the lion and the scorpion, may be more difficult to identify, being ordinary animals.²⁵⁵²

The monster-battle motif in the HB owes more to the popular NWS poetic tradition, although the host of helper creatures for the adversary of the Storm-God seems to have existed in both the Babylonian and the Amorite traditions. They may have originated as mnemonic devices for transmitting information of

²⁵⁵⁰ Cf. section 5.1.2.

²⁵⁵¹ Cf. section 5.1.3.

²⁵⁵² Cf. section 6.4.1.

symbolic geography (which also inadvertently also transmitted fragments of localized versions of the myth), which would account for the different configurations of the monsters we find in different geographic areas. While they may have shared elements and modes of thinking with their northern counterparts, these hypothetically local Palestinian traditions in the HB also necessarily contained characteristics unique to the Southern Levantine area. It is undeniable that the Sea, Yam, is often mentioned in connection with these monstrous creatures in the poetic texts of the HB, suggesting that at least in some of the texts we are able to read Yam as a divine name, similar to Yamm, the Prince Sea of Ugaritic myth.

The suggestion that the kingdoms of Ugarit and Mari may have shared some of the symbolic aspects of kingship, such as the Storm-God's defeat of the sea on behalf of the king, is a reasonable assumption, as both were in the sphere of interest of Yamhad, the greatest of the Amorite kingdoms, and were likely a part of its network of sponsored kingdoms. The political sponsoring of newly acceded monarchs, once sanctioned by the deliverance of the weapons of the Storm-God, is still evident in the text of the Baal Cycle, and the language of the royal "adoption scene" is still found in some HB texts, even if a Neo-Assyrian provenance is usually suggested for the texts.²⁵⁵³ The NWS kings were god's vice-regents on earth; this was in fact an actual title of the kings of Assyria during the Old Assyrian period. The "House of David" had in all likelihood similarly functioned as the vice-regents of Yahweh in the Pre-Exilic period, of which the use of the originally Amorite language of symbolic royal adoption in connection with the Davidic monarchs in the (much later) texts of the HB is witness; in particular, Amorite diplomatic language is found in Pss. 2 and 89.

In the Hebrew Bible the Various Traditions Are Brought Together

I have argued that there must have been at least three separate sources for the references or allusions to the Combat Myth in the texts of the HB:

- 1) the NWS or Amorite myth, which probably found its way into the texts from the shared NWS cultural milieu, as a common motif of popular poetry

²⁵⁵³ Cf. section 5.1.2.

(the theoretical, local Palestinian forms or iterations of this myth must also be counted here);²⁵⁵⁴

2) the Babylonian national myth *EE*, in which the older Amorite, Sumerian, and Akkadian influences were woven together to extol the god of Babylon, Marduk, as a consciously crafted tool of a specific political programme (these texts likely have an Exilic provenance).²⁵⁵⁵

This hybrid myth features aspects not found in the Amorite myth, such as the creation of the world and the cleaving of the sea in two. The cleaving of the sea is a motif found in certain Biblical passages, which seem to owe influence more to the hybrid myth than the original Amorite myth. But because it is likely one of the sources of the Babylonian tradition, it may therefore exert *indirect* influence on the Hebrew texts of this category. The finale source is:

3) Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, beginning with Sargon of Agade and his grand-son Naram-Sin, with some intermittent examples until the tradition finds resurgence with the Neo-Assyrian rulers, beginning with Tiglath-Pileser I, when the Combat Myth and conquest of the sea were embedded into a non-mythological facet of royal ideology.²⁵⁵⁶

There are certain Biblical passages alluding to the Combat Myth which, I have argued, owe influence to the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions (especially those of Esarhaddon), at least on the level of vocabulary and terminology.²⁵⁵⁷ In the royal inscriptions, it is not the Storm-God who conquers the sea, but the reigning monarch on his behalf, with his blessing, and sometimes even with his very own weapons.

It has been suggested that in Pre-Exilic times, the kings of Judah and Israel also shared this iconic relationship with the monarchic divinity, playing the part of the god in cult and ritual in which the divine combat was performed as a cultic drama. But what the texts of the HB seem to tell us is that this was no longer the case during the time of the writing of their final redactions. In the texts redacted and transmitted during the age of the ‘intolerant’ or ‘programmatic’ monolatry that existed after the advent of the Deuteronomistic movement and the ensuing anti-monarchic ideological programme, aspects previously shared by the god and the earthly king, or where the earthly king had once partaken of the aspects of the

²⁵⁵⁴ Cf. chapter 4, chapter 5.

²⁵⁵⁵ Cf. section 6.4.1.

²⁵⁵⁶ Cf. section 6.4.2.

²⁵⁵⁷ Cf. section 6.4.2.7.

god, were transposed onto the one god that survived these reforms. After the Exile, it was the ‘people of Israel’ who collectively took on the role of the elected son of Yahweh: the king.²⁵⁵⁸ Most of what is known of ancient Israelite kingship and the monarchic institution is based on this later and ideologically slanted material.

There are two different but intertwined traditions with shared origins that I have attempted to trace in this dissertation. On the one hand, there is the tradition which seems to have begun with Sargon of Agade, in which the successful completion of a campaign to the Mediterranean Sea was the hallmark of true kingship, and which seems to have continued as a theme in the inscriptions and royal propaganda of Mesopotamian kings all the way down to the times of Croesus, Hamilcar Barca, and Alexander the Great.²⁵⁵⁹ The witnesses of royal inscriptions are relatively easy to follow, as most monarchs did leave them, and various such inscriptions have also been discovered.²⁵⁶⁰ On the other hand, there is the mythological narrative tradition which seems to have begun with the same Sargonic legend, taking on a life of its own as a politicized mythological narrative. The witness of mythological remnants in the poetic tradition is much more difficult to trace, especially as the tradition could be transmitted orally as well as textually.

Phrases shared between Biblical poetry and the Mesopotamian inscriptions include “from sea to sea”, “from sea to the river”, “the great sea”, “shore of the sea”, “midst of the sea”, and “the heart of the seas”. There are also phrases that one might expect to find in the same context, but which are missing from the Biblical texts, such as the washing of the weapons in the sea and the placing of the stele on the seashore. It would seem that conquest of the Mediterranean coast seemed very different from the perspective of inland locations such as Babylon, as compared with Jerusalem or other cities of the Levantine littoral, let alone actual coastal cities like Ugarit, where the idea of the washing of the weapons and the setting up of stela are also missing. The parallelism of sea and river is found in the following verses, which also display other features familiar from royal inscriptions, such as geographic locations and the setting of boundaries: Ex. 23:31, Num. 34:3, 5–7, 11–12, Dt. 3:17, 4:49, 11:24.

²⁵⁵⁸ Cf. section 6.4.1.

²⁵⁵⁹ Cf. section 6.4.2.8.

²⁵⁶⁰ Cf. section 6.4.2.

The reason for the insertions must have been due to an ideological programme marking of the borders of the Empire. To interpret the texts as merely describing geographic features is to misconstrue the ideological content in the demarcation of borders by means of bodies of water. We find phrases familiar to Mesopotamian inscriptions also in Josh. 1:4, 5:1, 9:1, 12:3, 13:27, 15:2, 15:4–5, 15:11–12, 15:46–47, 16:3, 16:8, 17:9, 17:10, 18:19, 19:29, 23:4, 1 Kgs. 10:22, 2 Kgs. 14:25, and 2 Chr. 2:16. The most significant connections to the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions are in the passages that list cities and locations on the Levantine littoral, the passages that employ the term “the sea of the setting of the sun”, and the mention of the exotic animals connected with these coastal cities, all being features of the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. Although they do not feature direct quotations, there are also possible references to Mesopotamian royal inscriptions in several prophetic books. In particular, Ezekiel’s oracles against the king of Tyre in Ez. 28:1–19 may have adopted the language of royal inscriptions. There are also eight coincidences of the words ‘sea’ and ‘river’ in the Psalter, which may likewise owe some influence to the inscriptions: Pss. 24:2, 46:3–5, 66:6, 72:8, 80:11, 89:26, 93:2–4 and 98: 6–8.

One of the main purposes of royal inscriptions was to delineate or circumscribe the borders of the kingdom. In ANE geography, this usually entailed the recounting of cities and the mention of landmarks such as mountains and bodies of water. Ultimately, this had been the reason for the description of Sargon’s conquest of the sea in the OB period. There are several texts in the HB that employ this ideology. The course of the Upper Euphrates was described as the northern border of the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18; Dt. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4). David, in fact, is presented as having extended his military influence to its banks during the height of his power (2 Sam. 8:3; 10:16–18; 1 Kgs 4:24). Terms like “the river”, “the flood”, “the great river”, and “beyond the river” (Josh. 24:2–3; Ezra 4:10–13; Neh. 2:7–9) were traditionally used to refer to the Euphrates, historically a significant political and geographical boundary.

While the geographic conditions surrounding ancient Ugarit and Jerusalem differed, the evidence of the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions suggests that the phrase “from sea to sea” is ideological at least as much as it is geographic. The same cosmic geography is found in the Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, where the description of the borders of the world was meant to imply total, universal domination. Royal inscriptions of these kinds were called upon when rule

demanded legitimation; the more difficult the position of the monarch, the more legitimation was needed to consolidate one's rule. This process of consolidation may have coincided – and it often did – with the first years of a monarch's rule, but it was the uncertainty of their authority and rule rather than the temporal aspect that created the need for such legitimating royal inscriptions. There were other causes for the instability of a monarch's position, from war to famine to political unrest to the death of an heir, all of which might similarly have caused a need for propagandistic feats and inscriptions – and, I argue, for the use of the Combat Myth in royal propaganda.

If the myth bloomed in Ugarit, it seems to have undergone a withering in the interim, and in the Biblical texts we find mere scattered petals of its former flourish. Many of the proposed remnants or allusions to the myth in the HB can be found in Biblical poetry, both in psalms and in poetic fragments in prophetic and prosaic texts. In certain psalms in particular, there seems to be a curious connection between kingship and the sea. While these psalms often seem to extol the kingship of Yahweh, it has been proposed that many of the characteristics of Yahweh in the Pre-Exilic period were shared by the god and the king, respectively the king in heaven and the king on earth. The Biblical texts do not contain direct textual parallels with the Ugaritic texts, as hundreds of years again separate the corpora. But there are myths contemporary to the Biblical texts from the coastal towns of the Eastern Mediterranean which witness to the continued transmission of the motif in the area, so it is a reasonable assumption that along with most of the city-states and kingdoms of the Levantine littoral, ancient Israel was one of the recipients of this originally Amorite tradition.²⁵⁶¹

There are also references to and traces of the myth in sources which are much closer in age to the Biblical traditions. Later witnesses from the Eastern Mediterranean, both in the Phoenician inscriptions and the narratives transmitted by Hellenistic and Roman historians which are by and large contemporary to the Biblical texts, are testament to the continued importance of the mythology in the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.²⁵⁶² While the continued use of the Combat Myth as a foundational myth in these kingdoms is implied more than explicated in the texts, they are still extremely important witnesses, as they offer us alternative routes of the development of the mythological tradition which is both analogous

²⁵⁶¹ Cf. section 6.3.3.

²⁵⁶² Cf. section 6.3.3.

and contemporary to the witness of the Biblical texts. They also seem to attest to the continued mythologization of the tradition and its removal from cultic and ritual use, even though the myth was still employed as a political foundational myth in the Hellenistic era. But while in the Eastern Mediterranean the tradition is found in a variety of localized myths attached to regional bodies of water, and increasingly removed from consciously propagandistic political use, in the Mesopotamian area the myth seems to have been consciously crafted into the political programme of the rulers in their royal inscriptions as a facet of the hegemonic narrative.

As to whether all of these concepts featuring the sea actually refer or allude to one and the same tradition, the link between them is admittedly difficult to demonstrate, although it must be noted that both the concept of the washing of the weapon and the ruling from the Upper sea to the Lower sea, appear likewise in the oldest Sargonic inscriptions and the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, even if the mention of the washing of the weapons ends with Shalmaneser.²⁵⁶³ There appears to be no other ideological background that would explain the continued use of the terminology in royal inscriptions, so the motif of the Storm-God's battle with the sea on behalf of the king is *explanatory*.

The Political Programme of the Akkadian Sargonids Leads to the Myth's Formation

The character of Sargon was central to the formation of this tradition, and while little is known of the historicity of Sargon's campaigns, understanding these later traditions without reference to the ideological programme of the Sargonic rulers is impossible. While in the NWS traditions one is able to track and trace the development of an ever-expanding mythological constellation, in the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms one can trace the motif from royal inscription to royal inscription in a non-mythological and politicized form.²⁵⁶⁴ Both developments present us with an example of an 'evolving social memory'. It is the malleability and adjustability of social memory that allowed the motif to survive from king to king and from divinity to divinity. Based on the extant texts, it would seem that

²⁵⁶³ Cf. section 6.4.2.5.

²⁵⁶⁴ Cf. section 6.4.3.

the Sargonic political narrative came first, and only later gathered mythological material around its central core.

The older texts from Ebla demonstrate that the sea or the conquest of the sea was not a feature of the Combat Myth in this area prior to the character of Sargon entering the narrative.²⁵⁶⁵ These subsequent mythologizations may well owe some influence to (older) motifs of conflict unrelated to the sea (such as the story of the weather-god Ninurta's battle with the Anzu-bird), weaving them around this quite mundane kernel, which became increasingly more legendary and ritualized with the passing of time. In later traditions of the Combat Myth, we find integration of the originally separate motifs of the king's conquering of the sea and the weather-god's conquering of the monstrous serpent, as the king of the gods conquers the monster that is the sea.

The sea and the river of the Combat Myth have usually been interpreted as symbolizing the forces of chaos that must be subjugated in order for ordered society to be brought about – and yet this a dichotomy is explicated neither in the textual nor in the iconographic evidence pertaining to the myth.²⁵⁶⁶ In fact, we often find these chaotic aspects attached to the character of the king and to the king of the gods himself. When it comes to the political function of the Combat Myth, on the level of metaphor it is possible to interpret the sea as symbolizing the military (or executive) power of a king and the river as symbolizing the king's judicial power, both of which were symbolically and ideologically subjected to the ruler. The two forces which a king had to subjugate in human society, on the other hand, were the armed forces and the 'sea' of people. On the level of metaphor, this would answer the question that has long plagued scholars of the Combat Myth; namely, why the sea is not *killed* in any of the iterations of the myth – merely subjugated.

The division of the roles of the king may also explain the later developments in the mythologization of the OB Ordeal by River, which is not only connected to the traditions of the Combat Myth in later Assyrian narratives, but also appears to have undergone a similar mythologization process.²⁵⁶⁷ Traditions of the Combat Myth featuring a river instead of the sea do not necessarily contain references to the Ordeal, but may display variations of the

²⁵⁶⁵ Cf. section 6.2.1.

²⁵⁶⁶ Cf. section 3.2.

²⁵⁶⁷ Cf. section 4.4.

myth in which the myth was tied to some local body of water. But it is also possible that some of the texts may reference the river in allusion to the cultic functions of the king, emphasizing the king's role as judge in order to legitimize his dual role as an executive and a judiciary. While the kings of Palestine likely never oversaw judicial ordeals, the underlying mythology served to legitimize the role of the king as judiciary, a divine guarantee of the inerrancy and infallibility of the king's judgements.

Why the Sea Needed to be Conquered

In the poetic texts of the HB, the sea is found in several roles. Naturally, the sea is portrayed as a physical, nautical element, a geographic location; it is also used as a simple poetic metaphor. There are references to the sea being cleft, reminiscent of the Babylonian myth. Upon occasion, the sea appears to be anthropomorphized, yet there is no reason to assume that all of these passages necessarily allude to the Combat Myth. But there are certain texts in which the sea does appear in a role similar to that of Yamm of the Ugaritic texts. Especially interesting are the poetic fragments mentioning the river in connection with the sea with regard to the Ugaritic adversary of the Storm-God. I have discussed the co-appearance of sea and the king in many ancient NWS texts, from the school texts of the Sargonic Eshnunna²⁵⁶⁸ all the way down to the Persian period.²⁵⁶⁹ While the sea is an important geographical feature on the shore of the Eastern Mediterranean, where ancient Ugarit was located, there is much less occasion for its prominence in the myths and royal inscriptions of inland empires like Yamhad, Mari, and Assyria.

Psalms have a particularly close connection with kingship, in particular the so-called kingship and enthronement psalms. Psalms have been connected specifically with the character of King David, who was traditionally believed to have authored several of them.²⁵⁷⁰ While that is likely not the case, many of them do concern his character, which often seems to be portrayed in this role of vice-regent to Yahweh. But while there are linguistic, literary, and thematic parallels between the traditions of the Combat Myth in the NWS cultural area and these

²⁵⁶⁸ Cf. section 4.1.

²⁵⁶⁹ Cf. section 6.4.2.8.

²⁵⁷⁰ Cf. section 2.3.

poetic texts of the HB, there is no direct borrowing from or genetic dependence on any single source that can be established.

With regard to the mythologization of the conquest of the sea, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it is an example of symbolic legitimacy that began in the realm of earthly kingship and was later borrowed into the mythology of the Storm-God, in order to assert the legitimacy of the god's kingship over the assembled pantheon in a fashion very similar to how later kings employed the myth to assert the legitimacy of their own rule. Among the gods, the Storm-God *also* needed to legitimize and justify his rule of the other gods, and he was in mythology therefore vested with the symbols of human kingship – among these symbols being the mythologized event of the Mesopotamian king's conquering of the Mediterranean Sea.

There was a conscious ideological programme of using Sargon's character for the purposes of political propaganda by Neo-Assyrian rulers following Sargon I of Assyria. Some links in the chain of tradition were more significant than others, which ascertained the survival of the tradition into subsequent eras and ensured the adoption of the motif also in Biblical texts. While the tradition is ultimately derived from Sargon of Agade, and we can trace it through surviving royal inscriptions into the Akkadian era, the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser and Esarhaddon in particular seem to have contributed to some of the allusions to the Combat Myth in the Biblical texts.²⁵⁷¹

It must be admitted that the subjugation of the Mediterranean Sea would have been only one aspect of the legitimation of a king's power, and not necessarily even the most central one. The sources of legitimation of a king's rule varied from age to age and from place to place. While some aspects were shared by many ancient Semitic kings in their legitimization of monarchic rule, which unlike in neighbouring Egypt was seldom thrust upon them by accident of birth – at least insofar as the usual ideological narrative went – as election was much more significant in the legitimation of a NWS monarch's rule than the idea of participating in the cycle of primogeniture, there also existed significant variation to these themes.

While the Mesopotamian king may have borrowed ideological material from previous monarchs, few borrowed inscriptions or narratives wholesale,

²⁵⁷¹ Cf. section 6.4.2.2., section 6.4.2.7.

wanting to leave the imprint of their own character for subsequent generations. Egyptian influence doubtless flowed into its Asian territories during the Empire period and even later, and there is little reason to suggest that religious and mythological concepts were not among these influences. But a wealth of Asiatic religious and mythological concepts were also incorporated into Egyptian culture during these periods of contact. Based on the timing of the textual evidence at our perusal, it would seem that the NWS Combat Myth, used as a foundational myth in the petty kingdoms conquered by the Egyptians during the Empire period, was among these concepts which the Egyptians adopted from the ancient Semitic peoples.²⁵⁷²

The Resolution of the Crisis of Monarchy and the Myth of Divine Combat

I have also examined why and how *changes* took place within the tradition. Conservative though traditions are, they are not static. While it is possible that, at least to a certain extent, this language of legitimation employed the mythological backdrop of the Storm-God's battle against the Sea, I argue that the opposite also held true. The formation of the myth was founded in historical reality. What we find in the textual tradition is a sort of 'legitimation loop': a mythology sprang from an actual desire and necessity to conquer coastal regions, and this mythology was then used to legitimize a monarchic form of government subsequently confirmed by the conquest of coastal regions – a symbolic conquest of the sea, which served to display both to the king's god and to his people – and particularly to the king's army – a feat of supreme strength, in order to secure his election by the divinity.

In the texts of the HB, Yahweh is king. Baal and Marduk were also kings, but where they were content to rule the heavens and the assembly of the gods, leaving the administration of the world of men to their chosen – the kings – Yahweh's kingship stretched across all creation. No longer a necessary facet of political ideology, the role of Yahweh's vice-regent was faded into the background. But still there are texts in the HB, poetic fragments especially, where Yahweh's role as the warrior Storm-God, the monarchic god of the NWS peoples,

²⁵⁷² Cf. section 6.5.

is apparent. It is these in particular psalms that often allude to the Combat Myth. Aspects of the Storm-God have long been noted in connection with Yahweh, although it is generally recognized that other aspects went into his making as well – such as aspects of the solar deity.

Most of the poetic texts that describe Yahweh as a Storm-God are suggested to have originally featured in the temple cult, where the king may have performed the role of the god. It is in the texts where Yahweh is portrayed as the Storm-God and David as the prototypical or archetypal king that we get glimpses into the vice-regency of Yahweh, to a time when king was both high priest and supreme judge of his people. Of these, one finds witnesses especially in the texts that record the conquest of the river, as the connection between the king's judgement and the river existed already in the Old Babylonian period.²⁵⁷³

If there is a difference between Yahweh and these other Storm-God combatants, it is that he is more a victor than a combatant, his battle is historical rather than on-going, and his enemy is absolutely defeated and no longer looming as a threat. This ideological difference has been explained by the changing roles of the king and the god in Post-Exilic times. The relationship of god and king was complex and multi-faceted, with the religious and political ideologies feeding off and on each other. While the king borrowed from the authority of the Storm-God, so did the Storm-God, the king of the gods, borrow from the authority of the king – especially from the symbolic legitimacy of the legendary figure of Sargon.

The symbols and symbolic investiture of kingship were shared by the spheres of gods and men, and as closely linked as early kingship was to the temple institution, it seems futile to try and figure out which institution came first or the legitimacy of which borrowed from which. As an icon or a proxy for the divine power, the king performed the role of the divinity for his people. While kingship on earth was modelled after the ideal kingship in heaven, so was the kingship in heaven fashioned after the kingship on earth; there was a correspondence between the symbols and the symbolic investiture of these kingships. The role of king was shared by the mortal king and the divine king: the king of the gods was *also* a king, and therefore subject to the same symbols and rituals of kingship as the mortal king.

If, as I have intended to demonstrate, the function of the Combat Myth was

²⁵⁷³ Cf. section 4.4.

to establish and legitimize the rule of a monarch by basing it on the claim of the ancient conquest of the (Mediterranean) Sea, which seems to have been utilized by some of the most legendary rulers of the ANE to resolve the crisis of monarchic rule, then it would make sense that the emergent monarchies of Israel and Judah would have employed the same language in establishing and legitimizing the rule of these Levantine dynasties. It is extremely difficult to discern whether the historical inscriptions or royal legends should be seen as the immediate source of the mentions of the sea in the text of the HB, or whether it is the Combat Myth (intertwined with and possibly born from these royal legends) that should ultimately be considered their wellspring. It is quite clear that Hebrew poetry employed NWS poetic themes, motifs, and vocabulary quite liberally. There may indeed have been several disparate reasons for adopting the language of NWS mythology, whether directly or indirectly.

The Conclusions of the Thesis

The Combat Myth that we find in its formative period in the Mari of the Old Babylonian era, and which had developed into an epic mythic cycle of stories by the time of Late Bronze Age Ugarit, was the intellectual heritage of the authors of the Hebrew Bible. It is especially in archaizing poetry that we find more and less explicit references and allusions to the myth in language that echoes that of the earlier Amorite witnesses. Examining the broader socio-historical context of these vestigial traces goes a long way toward explaining why this mythological material, which clearly references a polytheistic framework, survived the re-invention of religious and cultic symbolism, not to mention the advent of the political programme that introduced Hebrew monolatry and the proposed centralization of the worship of one aniconic deity to the temple in Jerusalem. The context of all of the texts that I have examined is kingship, in one way or another. This is unsurprising, as the crisis of kingship must have been one of the major concerns of the authors of the texts. The loss of kingship, the centralization of the cult, and the destruction of the temple all contributed to the reshaping of this ancient NWS mythology, which seems to have presented (on the level of language, image, and symbol) a narrative much too powerful and appealing to completely discard in this changing situation.

And yet the narrative was subjected to the ideology of the new elite, the Yahweh-Alone movement, following the Exile. Whether or not the Exodus-narratives, of which the Combat Myth forms a part, have a historical kernel and whether or not the stories have a pre-history of hundreds of years, the existing narrative seems to have been used in the creation of a new national mythology during this time. This history is still reflected in the Biblical texts, even though they were compiled after the disaster of 586, after the exiled people had lost their temple, which housed their Storm-God as well as politically their king. There was nothing left in Jerusalem for the myth to legitimize, except for the people. In this new democratized national myth, the people fulfilled and performed the role that once belonged to the king.

It is true that, considered alone, much of the evidence presented in this dissertation may seem uncertain, insufficient, and unreliable. Definitive proof on matters of antiquity is notoriously difficult to establish, as is the case with most historical investigations. And yet it is not on the reliability of any single argument that my thesis rests, but on the force of the cumulative argument. It is this accumulation – or aggregation, to coin a term from Batto – of evidence which I hope tips the scales from possibility to plausibility. For while there is no single text that proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that the North West Semitic Myth of Divine Combat was used as a political, propagandistic narrative for the legitimation of kingship in the monarchies of Palestine in the first millennium before the Common Era, all of the evidence considered together paints a more plausible picture. The framework that I have created for the texts *explains* their survival through their function.

To sum up: previous research has shown that the cultic and ritual materials associated with the North West Semitic Storm-God were used in connection with the god Yahweh in the kingdoms of Palestine. One of the features that the emergent Palestinian kingdoms ‘inherited’ from the North West Semitic cultural sphere was the political use of the Combat Myth, specifically its use in the legitimation of the monarchic institution. Traces of the Combat Myth are found in the texts of the Hebrew Bible, especially in poetic fragments. These traces or remnants often describe Yahweh as a warrior Storm-God, armed with a weapon, and make mention of the monsters that he defeated, having adopted the king, his ‘Beloved’. Many of these allusions also have a connection to the institution of kingship, either mentioning the character of the archetypal King David or the

enthronement of Yahweh himself. Some of the verses may even borrow from Mesopotamian royal inscriptions. The fact that these traces of the Combat Myth in the Hebrew Bible seem to come from at least three different types of sources (general cultural influence, appropriated hegemonic narratives, and repurposed local traditions), owing influence to distinctly different cultural spheres and textual types, and the fact that their adoption seems to have taken place at different times and in various historical contexts, would seem to suggest against their representation of a living native tradition in the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

On the other hand, the sheer wealth of these references in the Biblical texts and their survival in changing contexts – among them the disappearance of the very institution in which they were based – would suggest that the myth had a very strong foundation in the culture that continued trading the texts. While the Pre-Exilic composers of ancient Hebrew poetry may well have used common North West Semitic traditions and motifs in discussing questions of royal ideology and the legitimation of kingship, we do know that after the Exile and the end of the Jerusalem monarchy, which is when these texts were redacted, their ideological context had shifted radically. We are fortunate that verses that once exalted both king and god were transferred onto the character of Yahweh, because with these verses we are allowed rare glimpses into the ancient Hebrew monarchic institution.

By and large, it does not seem surprising that references, allusions, remnants, and vestiges of the Combat Myth would have survived in the Biblical texts, especially in Biblical poetry, the canonized forms of which were likely written down during the Persian era and later. Through an analysis of the still remaining physical evidence from Mesopotamia in the royal inscriptions, we are able to trace the transmission of these concepts textually well into the Persian era, from one monarch to the next. It is true that the language transformed along the way, but the concept is still recognizable. The frequency with which one can find some manner of mention of this myth in the Biblical texts is also evidence of the importance and central status of this myth – both in the broader ancient world and for the Biblical authors.

The myth that been used by the North West Semitic peoples for nearly two millennia had deep roots in the collective *conscience* of the people. This is why it found new uses in Exilic literature as a means of fostering a new national identity. Using the language of the old local myths and the new mythologies of Babylon,

whose god and king were for a time the pinnacle of the world, the exiles wrote the story of their Exodus and return home. But the narrative was projected onto safer territory – it was reforged into a story where *they* – the people of Israel – were the king that conquered and divided the sea with the might of the national god, Yahweh, and where the old king that led them was no king at all. The old king was almost like a parody of Sargon, failing to conquer the very home of the people.

The myth was familiar; it was instantly, viscerally recognizable, it was powerful, and it found new life as a building block of the new national identity, no longer used to legitimize the monarchic rule of the king but to legitimize the very existence of the people of Israel. For the first time since the ideologues of the Akkadian Sargon had used various previously existing mythic elements to forge a new myth to legitimize the rule of a single sovereign over the first Empire, the myth of divine combat was used to legitimize a polyarchic state of existence – a people without a king. And in doing this, the cry which begins the final tablet of the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.6. I 6–7) was finally answered: “Baal is dead, what of the peoples? the son of Dagan, what of the multitudes?” The people had become the king.

Appendix I: Chronological table

Egypt ²⁵⁷⁴	Mesopotamia ²⁵⁷⁵	Syria ²⁵⁷⁶	Hittite ²⁵⁷⁷	Ugarit ²⁵⁷⁸	Palestine ²⁵⁷⁹
Old Kingdom:					
Dynasty III 2686–2613	Early Dynastic 2900–2530	Mari as central Mesopotamian hub 2900 c.			
Dynasty IV 2613–2498	Early Assyrian Kingdom 2600–2335	First Mari Dynasty 2500 c. Ebla/Mari dominance Destruction of Mari 2300			
Dynasty V 2498–2345	III Dynasty of Uruk 2295–2271 First Lagash dynasty c. 2500–2300	Kingdom of Armani c. 2400–2200			
Dynasty VI 2345–2181	Akkadian Empire 2270–2215 <i>Sargon of Agade</i>				
First Intermediate					
Dynasty VII 2181–2160	Gutian Dynasty 2141–2050				
Dynasty VIII 2181–2160					
Dynasty IX 2160–2130				Amorite conquests of coastal Syria 2300–1900	Amorite invasions c. 2150
Dynasty X 2130–2040	5 th dynasty of Uruk 2055–2048 Second Lagash dynasty ??-2046				
Dynasty XI 2134–1991	Ur III 2047–1940	Amorite Dynasty of Mari 1900 c.	Hattic Kingdom 2100–1600 c.	2 nd Mil. Amorite population	Jerusalem mentioned
Middle Kingdom:					
Dynasty XI 2134–1991	Isin-Larsa c. 1953–1674				
Dynasty XII 1991–1803	Amorite Kingdoms 2000–1595			Egyptian control 1900 c.	
Dynasty XIII 1803–1649	First Babylonian Dynasty 1830 – 1531	Kingdom of Yamhad 1810–1595		Early Dynasty c. 1850–1800	Canaanite walls
Dynasty XIV 1705–1690	Middle Assyrian Empire 1720–1076 Sealand Dynasty c. 1700–1460	Sack of Mari 1759			

²⁵⁷⁴ Cf. Redford 1986; Shaw 2000.

²⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Van de Mieroop 2006; Oppenheim 1976.

²⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Newgrosh 2007.

²⁵⁷⁷ Cf. Bryce 2005.

²⁵⁷⁸ Cf. van Soldt 1995; Yon 1997.

²⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Weippert 1988, Sharon 2014.

Second Intermediate:					
Dynasty XV 1674–1535	Kassite Dynasty 1959–1155		Old Kingdom 1600–1400		
Dynasty XVI 1660–1600		End of Amorite dynasty of Aleppo c. 1600			
Dynasty XVII 1650–1549					
New Kingdom:					
Dynasty XVIII 1549–1292 The Amarna period 1300 c.	Sack of Babylon 1531 Middle Assyrian Kingdom 1380–1180	Aleppo conquered by Mitanni 1400 c. Aleppo in Hittite control 1300 c.	Middle Kingdom c. 1450–1400	Ugarit dynasty 1360–1200	Egyptian control 1550 -1400 Amarna period 1350–1330
Dynasty XIX 1292–1189			Empire c. 1400–1178	Hittite control 1300 c.	
Dynasty XX 1189–1077 Sea peoples	2 nd Isin dynasty 1157–1026 Assyrian domination 1114–1076, Semitic conquests of Babylon	Arpad 1100 c. Neo-Hittite kingdoms	Fall of Hattusa 1178	Abandoned 1190	Withdrawal of Egyptians 1178
					Decentralized kingdoms
Third Intermediate					
Dynasty XXI 1069–945	Period of Chaos 1056–911 Post-Kassite dynasties 1025–732				Judah and Israel 900 c. ?
Dynasty XXII 945–720	Neo-Assyrian Empire 912–612				Egyptian control 925 Assyrian conquest 854–846 Aram-Damascus 830
Dynasty XXIII 837–728					Neo-Assyrian empire 733
Dynasty XXIV 732–720					Siege of Jerusalem 712
Dynasty XXV 732–653	Neo-Babylonian Empire 626–539				Egyptian Empire 609 Neo-Babylonian control 605
Late Period					
Dynasties XXVI–XXVII 672–525	Achaemenid Empire 550–330				Persian control 539–332
1 st Achaemenid Period 525–343					
2 nd Achaemenid Period 343–332					
<i>Argead Dynasty 332–</i>	<i>Argead Dynasty 331–</i>	<i>Argead Dynasty 332–</i>	<i>Argead Dynasty 333–</i>		<i>Argead Dynasty 332–</i>

Appendix II: Mari Texts

FM 7 38 (1–4')²⁵⁸⁰

a-na be-lí-ia qí-bí-ma
um-ma nu-úr-^dsu'en ñr-ka-a-ma
^la-bí-ia a-pí-lum ša ^dIM be-el ħa-la-
a[^b^{ki}]
il-li-kam-ma ki-a-am iq-bé-e-em
um-ma-a-mi ^dIM-ma ma-a-tam₄ (TUM)
ka-la-ša
a-na ia-aĥ-du-li-im ad-di-in
ù i-na ^{giš}tukul.meš-ia ma-ĥi-ra-am ú-ul
ir-ši
i-ia-tam i-zi-ib-ma ma-a-tam ša ad-di-
nu-šu[m]
a-na sa-am-si-^dIM ad-[di-i]n
[...^l]sa-am-si-^dIM

(lacuna)

lu-t[e-e]r-ka a-na ^{giš}[gu.za É a-bi-ka]

ú-te-er-ka ^{giš}tukul.[meš]
ša it-ti te-em-tim am-ta-aĥ-šú
ad-di-na-ak-kum

To my lord say:

“Thus Nur-Sin, your servant:
 Abiya, the prophet of Addu, the Lord of
 Alep[po],
 he came to me and thus he said:
 ‘Says Adad: “The land, in its entirety

I had given to Yahdun-Lim,
 and with my weapons, an equal he did
 not encounter,
 (yet when) he abandoned me, the land
 which I had given hi[m],
 I g[av]e to Šamši-Adad
 ... Šamši-Adad

(lacuna)

--let me r[e]store you! On the [throne
 of the house of your father]
 I returned you, the weapon[s]
 with which I struck the sea
 I have given you ...””

FM 7 5 (A.1858)²⁵⁸¹

a-na be-lí-ia
qí-bí-ma
um-ma su-mu-i-la
ñr-ka-a-ma
^{giš}tukul-ĥi-a ša ^dIM
ša ħa-la-ab[^{ki}]
ik-šu-du-nim-m[a]
i-na É ^dDa-gan
i-na Ter-qa^{ki}
ka-le-ek-šu-nu-ti
a-na ki-ma be-lí i-ša-pa-ra-am
lu-pu-uš

To my lord

say:

“Thus Sumuila,
 your servant:
 ‘The weapons of Adad
 of Aleppo
 have reached [me],
 in the temple of Dagan
 in Terqa
 I will keep them.
 As my lord writes to me,
 let it be done!’”

²⁵⁸⁰ The text is also widely known by the museum accession number A.1968. Only the pertinent lines have been translated. For a full transliteration, translation, and facsimile see Durand 1993, 43–45.

²⁵⁸¹ Published (as A.3597) by J.-M. Durand 1995, 306, in *Mitologia y Religion del Oriente Antigo* 2/1 (eds. G. del Olmo Lete, J. Lopez, J. Sanmartín. Barcelona: Sabadell) and 1993, 53 in MARI 7.

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AASOR – Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABD – Anchor Bible Dictionary
ABY – Abydos King List
AHW – Akkadisches Handwörterbuch
AIUON – Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli
AJSL – The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANEP – The Ancient Near East in Pictures
ANET – Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
AO – Analecta Orientalia
AOAT – Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARE – Ancient Records of Egypt
ARET – Archivi Reali di Ebla Testi
ARI – Assyrian Royal Inscriptions
ARM – Archives Royales de Mari
ARMT – Archives Royales de Mari Textes
AS – Assyriological Studies (Chicago)
AT – The Alalakh Tablets
BA – The Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR – Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Research
BDB – Brown-Driver-Briggs
BAW – Die Bibliothek der alten Welt
BHS – Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BJS – Biblical and Judaic Studies
BM – British Museum
BZAW – Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD – The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
CB OTS – Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament Series
CBQ – The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CT – Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets &c. in the British Museum (London 1869–)
CTA – Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit
CoT – Coffin Text
CQ – The Classical Quarterly, New Series
DAI – Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
DDD – Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible
DJD – Discoveries from the Judean Desert
EA – El Amarna letters
Eblaitica – Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language, Eds. C. H. Gordon & G. A. Rendsburg.
EKL – Ebla King List in Stieglitz 2002.
EN – Excavations at Nuzi, ed. E. Chiera. HSS V/IX.
HALOT – Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
HANES – History of the Ancient Near East Studies
HBS – Herders Biblische Studien
HdO – Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM – Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS – Harvard Semitic Series.
HTR – Harvard Theological Review
HTS – Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA – Hebrew Union College Annual
IAK – Die Inschriften der altassyrische Könige
IEJ – Israel Exploration Journal
JA – Journal Asiatique
JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society

JANER – Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions
 JBL – Journal of Biblical Literature
 JEA – The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
 JESHO – Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Levant
 JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies
 JNSL – Journal of North West Semitic Languages
 JPOS – Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society. Eds. H. Danby & D. N. Barbour. (Jerusalem)
 JSOTS – Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements
 JSS – Journal of Semitic Studies
 KAI – Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften
 KL – Altsumerischen Kultlieder, Ed. H. Zimmern
 KTU – Die Keilalphabetische Texte aus Ugarit.
 KUB – Keilschrifturkunden aus Bozazköi
 LSAWS – Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
 LXX – Septuagint
 MAD – Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary
 MAL – Middle Assyrian Laws in Driver & Miles 1935
 MARI – Mari: Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires
 MSL – Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon, ed. M. Civil.
 MT – Masoretic Text
 NABU – Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires
 Nisaba – Nisaba Religious Texts Translation Series, eds. M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss & al. (Leiden)
 OBO – Orbis biblicus et orientalis
 OECT – Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts (Oxford 1932–)
 OLA – Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta
 PEQ – Palestine Exploration Quarterly
 PRU – Le Palais royal d'Ugarit, Eds. C. F.-A. Schaeffer & J. Nougayrol (Paris)
 PT – The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts
 RAW – Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia, Eds. H. C. Rawlinson & G. Smith
 RIMA – The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Periods, Ed. A. K. Grayson (Toronto 1987, 1991)
 RIME – The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods. Ed. D. R. Frayne. (Toronto 1993, 2008)
 RINAP – The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
 RLA – Reallexikon der Assyriologie
 RS – Ras Shamra excavation number
 RSR – Religious Studies Review
 SAACT – State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
 SAK – Sakkara King List
 SAOC – Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
 SBP – Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms, Ed. S. Langdon (Paris 1909)
 SBH – Sumerische-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit
 SEL – Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico, Ed. M. G. A. Guzzo & al. (Rome 1984–)
 SESJ – Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisu
 SKL – Sumerian King List
 TA – Teologinen Aikakauskirja
 TFBC – Texts from the Babylonian Collection, ed. W. W. Hallo. (New Haven).
 TLOT – Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament, 3 vols. Eds. E. Jenni & C. Westermann. (Peabody, MA 1994–1997).
 TUAT – Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments
 UBL – Ugaritische Biblische Literature
 UF – Ugarit Forschungen
 VAT – Tablets in the collection of the Berlin Staatliche Museen
 VT – Vetus Testamentum
 VTS – Vetus Testamentum Supplements
 WUNT – Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
 ZAT – Zehn altbabylonische Tontafeln aus Helsingfors
 ZAW – Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
 ZDMG – Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft

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